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THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

JAMES MONTGOMERY.

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VOL. II.

THE WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD.

AND

OTHER POEMS.

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PREFACE.

THERE is no authentic history of the world from the Creation to the Deluge, besides that which is found in the first chapters of Genesis. He, therefore, who fixes the date of a fictitious narrative within that period, is under obligation to no other authority whatever for conformity of manners, events, or even localities: he has full power to accommodate these to his peculiar purposes, observing only such analogy as shall consist with the brief

information, contained in the sacred records, concerning mankind in the earliest ages. The present writer acknowledges, that he has exercised this undoubted right with great freedom. Success alone sanctions bold innovation; if he has succeeded in what he has attempted, he will need no arguments to justify it; if he has miscarried, none will avail him. Those who imagine that he has exhibited the antediluvians as more skilful in arts and arms than can be supposed, in their stage of society, may read the *Eleventh* Book of PARADISE LOST; — and those who think he has made the religion of the Patriarchs too evangelical, may read the *Twelfth*.

With respect to the personages and incidents of his story, the Author having deliber-

ately adopted them, under the conviction, that in the characters of the one he was not stepping out of human nature, and in the construction of the other not exceeding the limits of poetical probability, — he asks no favour, he deprecates no censure, on behalf of either; nor shall the facility with which "much malice and a little wit" might turn into ridicule every line that he has written, deter him from leaving the whole to the mercy of general Readers.

But, — here is a large web of fiction involving a small fact of Scripture! Nothing could justify a work of this kind, if it were, in any way, calculated to impose on the credulity, pervert the principles, or corrupt the affections

of its approvers. Here, then, the appeal lies to conscience rather than to taste, and the decision on this point is of infinitely more importance to the Poet than his name among men, or his interests on earth. It was his design, in this composition, to present a similitude of events, that might be imagined to have happened in the first age of the world, in which such Scripture-characters as are introduced would probably have acted and spoken as they are here made to act and speak. The story is told as a parable only; and its value, in this view, must be determined by its moral, or rather by its religious influence on the mind and on the heart. Fiction though it be, it is the fiction that represents Truth; and that *is* Truth, — Truth in the essence, though not in

the name; Truth in the spirit, though not in the letter.

Of the Miscellanies that compose the Second Part of this volume, nothing need be said in this place.

The Third Part consists of small poems and extracts from a volume published in 1797, which has long been out of print, and which is not worthy to be reprinted. As, however, it has frequently been enquired for, by those who had obtained some knowledge of the personal history of the Author, for the sake of the "*Prison Amusements*," which it contained, those Pieces are now republished, with such retrenchments as at this distant period seemed necessary. In behalf of these, the forbearance

lonised by emigrants from these, or peopled by the posterity of Cain. In process of time, after the Sons of God had formed connections with the daughters of men, and there were Giants in the earth, the latter assumed to be Lords and Rulers over mankind, till among themselves arose One, excelling all his brethren in knowledge and power, who became their King, and by their aid, in the course of a long life, subdued all the inhabited earth, except the land of Eden. This land, at the head of a mighty army, principally composed of the descendants of Cain, he has invaded and conquered, even to the banks of Euphrates, at the opening of the action of the poem. It is only necessary to add, that for the sake of distinction, the invaders are frequently denominated from Cain, as "the host of Cain," — "the force of Cain," — "the camp of Cain;" — and the remnant of the defenders of Eden are, in like manner, denominated from Eden. — The Jews have an ancient tradition, that some of the Giants, at the Deluge, fled to the top of a high mountain, and escaped the ruin that involved the rest of their kindred. In the tenth Canto of the following Poem, a hint is borrowed from this tradition, but it is made to yield to the superior authority of Scripture-testimony.

THE

WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD,

A POEM,

IN TEN CANTOS.

THE

WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD.

CANTO FIRST.

The Invasion of Eden by the Descendants of Cain. The Flight of Javan from the Camp of the Invaders to the Valley where the Patriarchs dwelt. The Story of Javan's former life.

EASTWARD of Eden's early peopled plain,
When Abel perish'd by the hand of Cain,
The murderer from his Judge's presence fled:
Thence to the rising sun his offspring spread;
But he, the fugitive of care and guilt,
Forsook the haunts he chose, the homes he built;
While filial nations hail'd him Sire and Chief,
Empire nor honour brought his soul relief:

He found, where'er he roam'd, uncheer'd, unblest,
No pause from suffering, and from toil no rest.

Ages meanwhile, as ages now are told,
O'er the young world in long succession roll'd;
For such the vigour of primeval man,
Through number'd centuries his period ran,
And the first Parents saw their hardy race,
O'er the green wilds of habitable space,
By tribes and kindred, scatter'd wide and far,
Beneath the track of every varying star.
But as they multiplied from clime to clime,
Embolden'd by their elder brother's crime,
They spurn'd obedience to the Patriarchs' yoke,
The bonds of Nature's fellowship they broke;
The weak became the victims of the strong,
And Earth was fill'd with violence and wrong.

Yet long on Eden's fair and fertile plain,
A righteous nation dwelt, that knew not Cain;

There fruits and flowers, in genial light and dew,
Luxuriant vines, and golden harvests grew;
By freshening waters flocks and cattle stray'd,
While Youth and Childhood watch'd them from the shade;
Age, at his fig-tree, rested from his toil,
And manly vigour till'd the unfailing soil;
Green sprang the turf, by holy footsteps trod,
Round the pure altars of the living God;
Till foul Idolatry those altars stain'd,
And lust and revelry through Eden reign'd.
Then fled the people's glory and defence,
The joys of home, the peace of innocence;
Sin brought forth sorrows in perpetual birth,
And the last light from heaven forsook the earth,
Save in one forest-glen, remote and wild,
Where yet a ray of lingering mercy smiled,
Their quiet course where Seth and Enoch ran,
And God and Angels deign'd to walk with man.

Now from the east, supreme in arts and arms,
The tribes of Cain, awakening war-alarms,
Full in the spirit of their father, came
To waste their brethren's lands with sword and flame.
In vain the younger race of Adam rose,
With force unequal, to repel their foes:
Their fields in blood, their homes in ruins lay,
Their whole inheritance became a prey;
The stars, to whom as Gods they raised their cry,
Roll'd, heedless of their offerings, through the sky;
Till urged on Eden's utmost bounds at length,
In fierce despair they rallied all their strength.
They fought, but they were vanquish'd in the fight,
Captured, or slain, or scatter'd in the flight:
The morning battle-scene at eve was spread
With ghastly heaps, the dying and the dead;
The dead unmourn'd, unburied left to lie,
By friends and foes, the dying left to die.
The victim, while he groan'd his soul away,
Heard the gaunt vulture hurrying to his prey,

Then strengthless felt the ravening beak, that tore
His widen'd wounds, and drank the living gore.

One sole-surviving remnant, void of fear,
Woods in their front, Euphrates in their rear,
Were sworn to perish at a glorious cost,
For all they once had known, and loved, and lost;
A small, a brave, a melancholy band,
The orphans, and the childless of the land.
The hordes of Cain, by giant-chieftains led,
Wide o'er the north their vast encampment spread:
A broad and sunny champaign stretch'd between;
Westward a maze of waters girt the scene;
There on Euphrates, in its ancient course,
Three beauteous rivers roll'd their confluent force,
Whose streams, while man the blissful garden trod,
Adorn'd the earthly paradise of God;
But since he fell, within their triple bound,
Fenced a long region of forbidden ground;

Meeting at once, where high athwart their bed
Repulsive rocks a curving barrier spread,
The embattled floods, by mutual whirlpools crost,
In hoary foam and surging mist were lost;
Thence, like an Alpine cataract of snow,
White down the precipice they dash'd below;
There in tumultuous billows broken wide,
They spent their rage, and yoked their fourfold tide;
Through one majestic channel, calm and free,
The sister-rivers sought the parent-sea.

The midnight watch was ended;—down the west
The glowing moon declined towards her rest;
Through either host the voice of war was dumb;
In dreams the hero won the fight to come;
No sound was stirring, save the breeze that bore
The distant cataract's everlasting roar,
When from the tents of Cain, a Youth withdrew;
Secret and swift, from post to post he flew,

And pass'd the camp of Eden, while the dawn
Gleam'd faintly o'er the interjacent lawn;
Skirting the forest, cautiously and slow,
He fear'd at every step to start a foe;
Oft leap'd the hare across his path, up sprung
The lark beneath his feet, and soaring sung;
What time, o'er eastern mountains seen afar,
With golden splendour, rose the morning star,
As if an Angel-sentinel of night,
From earth to heaven, had wing'd his homeward flight, —
Glorious at first, but lessening by the way,
And lost insensibly in higher day.

From track of man and herd his path he chose,
Where high the grass, and thick the copsewood rose:
Then by Euphrates' banks his course inclined,
Where the grey willows trembled to the wind;
With toil and pain their humid shade he clear'd,
When at the porch of heaven the sun appear'd,

Through gorgeous clouds that streak'd the orient sky,
And kindled into glory at his eye;
While dark amidst the dews that glitter'd round,
From rock and tree, long shadows traced the ground.
Then climb'd the fugitive an airy height,
And resting, back o'er Eden cast his sight.

Far on the left, to man for ever closed,
The Mount of Paradise in clouds reposed:
The gradual landscape open'd to his view;
From Nature's face the veil of mist withdrew,
And left, in clear and purple light reveal'd,
The radiant river, and the tented field;
The black pine-forest, in whose girdle lay
The patriot phalanx, hemm'd in close array;
The verdant champaign narrowing to the north,
Whence from their dusky quarters sallied forth
The proud Invaders, early roused to fight,
Tribe after tribe emerging into light;

Whose shields and lances, in the golden beams,
Flash'd o'er the restless scene their flickering gleams,
As when the breakers catch the morning glow,
And ocean rolls in living fire below;
So round the unbroken border of the wood,
The Giants pour'd their army like a flood,
Eager to force the covert of their foe,
And lay the last defence of Eden low.

From that safe eminence, absorb'd in thought,
Even till the wind the shout of legions brought,
He gazed,—his heart recoil'd,—he turn'd his head,
And o'er the southern hills his journey sped.

Who was the fugitive?—in infancy
A youthful Mother's only hope was he,
Whose spouse and kindred, on a festal day,
Precipitate destruction swept away;
Earth trembled, open'd, and entomb'd them all;
She saw them sinking, heard their voices call

Beneath the gulph, — and agonized, aghast,
On the wild verge of eddying ruin cast,
Felt in one pang, at that convulsive close,
A Widow's anguish, and a Mother's throes:
A Babe sprang forth, an inauspicious birth,
Where all had perish'd that she loved on earth,
Forlorn and helpless, on the upriven ground,
The parent, with her offspring, Enoch found:
And thence with tender care and timely aid,
Home to the Patriarchs' glen his charge convey'd.

Restored to life, one pledge of former joy,
One source of bliss to come, remain'd, — her boy!
Sweet in her eye the cherish'd infant rose,
At once the seal and solace of her woes;
When the pale widow clasp'd him to her breast,
Warm gush'd the tears, and would not be represt;
In lonely anguish, when the truant child
Leap'd o'er the threshold, all the mother smiled.

In him, while fond imagination view'd
Husband and parents, brethren, friends renew'd,
Each vanish'd look, each well-remember'd grace,
That pleased in them, she sought in Javan's face:
For quick his eye and changeable its ray,
As the sun glancing through a vernal day;
And like the lake, by storm or moonlight seen,
With darkening furrows or cerulean mien,
His countenance, the mirror of his breast,
The calm or trouble of his soul express'd.

As years enlarged his form, in moody hours,
His mind betray'd its weakness with its powers;
Alike his fairest hopes and strangest fears
Were nursed in silence, or divulged with tears:
The fulness of his heart repress'd his tongue,
Though none might rival Javan when he sung.
He loved, in lonely indolence reclined,
To watch the clouds, and listen to the wind,

But from the north, when snow and tempest came,
His nobler spirit mounted into flame;
With stern delight he roam'd the howling woods,
Or hung in ecstasy o'er headlong floods.
Meanwhile excursive fancy long'd to view
The world, which yet by fame alone he knew;
The joys of freedom were his daily theme,
Glory the secret of his midnight dream;
That dream he told not; though his heart would ache,
His home was precious for his mother's sake.
With her the lowly paths of peace he ran,
His guardian angel, till he verged to man;
But when her weary eye could watch no more,
When to the grave her timeless corse he bore,
Not Enoch's counsels could his steps restrain;
He fled, and sojourn'd in the land of Cain,
There, when he heard the voice of Jubal's lyre,
Instinctive Genius caught the ethereal fire;

And soon, with sweetly-modulating skill,
He learn'd to wind the passions at his will,
To rule the chords with such mysterious art,
They seem'd the life-strings of the hearer's heart!
Then Glory's opening field he proudly trod,
Forsook the worship and the ways of God,
Round the vain world pursued the phantom Fame,
And cast away his birthright for a name.

Yet no delight the Minstrel's bosom knew,
None save the tones that from his harp he drew,
And the warm visions of a wayward mind,
Whose transient splendour left a gloom behind,
Frail as the clouds of sunset, and as fair,
Pageants of light resolving into air.
The world, whose charms his young affections stole,
He found too mean for an immortal soul;
Wound with his life, through all his feelings wrought,
Death and eternity possess'd his thought;

Remorse impelled him, unremitting care
Harass'd his path, and stung him to despair.
Still was the secret of his griefs unknown,
Amidst the universe he sighed alone ;
The fame he follow'd and the fame he found,
Heal'd not his heart's immedicable wound ;
Admired, applauded, crown'd, where'er he roved,
The Bard was homeless, friendless, unbeloved.
All else that breathed below the circling sky,
Were link'd to earth by some endearing tie ;
He only, like the ocean-weed uptorn,
And loose along the world of waters borne,
Was cast companionless, from wave to wave,
On life's rough sea, — and there was none to save.

The Giant King, who led the hosts of Cain,
Delighted in the Minstrel and his vein ;
No hand, no voice, like Javan's could controul,
With soothing concords his tempestuous soul,

With him the wand'ring Bard, who found no rest
Through ten years' exile, sought his native west:
There from the camp retiring, he pursued
His journey to the Patriarchs' solitude.
This son of peace no martial armour wore,
A scrip for food, a staff in hand he bore;
Flaxen his robe; and o'er his shoulder hung,
Broad as a warrior's shield, his harp unstrung,
A shell of tortoise, exquisitely wrought
With hieroglyphics of embodied thought;
Jubal himself enchased the polished frame;
And Javan won it in the strife for fame,
Among the sons of Music, when their Sire
To his victorious skill adjudged the lyre.

'Twas noon, when Javan climb'd the bordering hill,
By many an old remembrance hallow'd still,
Whence he beheld, by sloping woods enclosed,
The hamlet where his Parent's dust reposed,

His home of happiness in early years,
And still the home of all his hopes and fears,
When from ambition struggling to break free,
He mused on joys and sorrows yet to be.
Awhile he stood, with rumination pale,
Casting an eye of sadness o'er the vale,
When, suddenly abrupt, spontaneous prayer
Burst from his lips for One who sojourn'd there;
For One, whose cottage, far appearing, drew,
Even from his Mother's grave, his transient view;
One, whose unconscious smiles were wont to dart
Ineffable emotion through his heart;
A nameless sympathy, more sweet, more dear
Than friendship, solaced him when she was near,
And well he guess'd, while yet a timorous boy,
That Javan's artless songs were Zillah's joy.
But when ambition, with a fiercer flame
Than untold love, had fired his soul for fame,
This infant passion, cherish'd yet represt,
Lived in his pulse, but died within his breast

For oft in distant lands, when hope beat high,
Westward he turn'd his eager glistening eye,
And gazed in spirit on her absent form,
Fair as the moon emerging through the storm,
Till sudden, strange, bewildering horrors cross'd
His thought,—and every glimpse of joy was lost.
Even then, when melancholy numb'd his brain,
And life itself stood still in every vein,
While his cold, quivering lips sent vows above,
—Never to curse her with his bitter love!
His heart, espoused with hers, in secret sware
To hold its truth unshaken by despair:
The vows dispersed that from those lips were borne,
But never, never, was that heart forsworn;
Throughout the world, the charm of Zillah's name
Repell'd the touch of every meaner flame.
Jealous and watchful of the Sex's wiles,
He trembled at the light of Woman's smiles!
So turns the mariner's mistrusting eye
From proud Orion bending through the sky,

Beauteous and terrible, who shines afar,
At once the brightest and most baneful star.*

Where Javan from that eastern hill survey'd
The circling forest and embosom'd glade,
Earth wore one summer-robe of living green,
In heaven's blue arch the sun alone was seen;
Creation slumber'd in the cloudless light,
And noon was silent as the depth of night.
O what a throng of rushing thoughts oppress'd,
In that vast solitude, his anxious breast!
— To wither in the blossom of renown,
And unrecorded to the dust go down,
Or for a name on earth, to quit the prize
Of immortality beyond the skies,

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* Cosi l' infausti rai
Spande Oriòne, e i naviganti attrista,
Oriòn, chi tra gli astri in ciel risplende
Vie più d' ogni altro, e più d' ogni altro offende.
FILICAJA.

Perplex'd his wavering choice: — when Conscience
fail'd,
Love rose against the World, and Love prevail'd;
Passion, in aid of Virtue, conquer'd Pride,
And Woman won the heart to Heaven denied.

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

THE

WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD.

CANTO SECOND.

Javan, descending through the Forest, arrives at the Place where he had formerly parted with Zillah, when he withdrew from the Patriarchs' Glen. There he again discovers her in a Bower formed on the Spot. Their strange Interview, and abrupt Separation.

STEEP the descent, and wearisome the way;
The twisted boughs forbade the light of day;
No breath from heaven refresh'd the sultry gloom,
The arching forest seem'd one pillar'd tomb,
Upright and tall the trees of ages grow,
While all is loneliness and waste below;

There, as the massy foliage, far aloof
Display'd a dark impenetrable roof,
So, gnarl'd and rigid, clasp and interwound,
An uncouth maze of roots emboss'd the ground:
Midway beneath, the sylvan wild assumed
A milder aspect, shrubs and flowerets bloom'd;
Openings of sky, and little plots of green,
And showers of sun-beams through the leaves were
seen.

Awhile the traveller halted at the place,
Where last he caught a glimpse of Zillah's face,
One lovely eve, when in that calm retreat
They met, as they were often wont to meet,
And parted, not as they were wont to part,
With gay regret, but heaviness of heart;
Though Javan named for his return the night,
When the new moon had roll'd to full-orb'd
light.

She stood, and gazed through tears, that forced
their way,
Oft as from steep to steep, with fond delay,
Lessening at every view, he turn'd his head,
Hail'd her with weaker voice, then forward sped.
From that sad hour, she saw his face no more
In Eden's woods, or on Euphrates' shore:
Moons wax'd and waned; to *her* no hope appear'd,
Who much his death, but more his falsehood fear'd.

Now, while he paused, the lapse of years forgot,
Remembrance eyed her lingering near the spot.
Onward he hasten'd; all his bosom burn'd,
As if that eve of parting were return'd;
And she, with silent tenderness of woe,
Clung to his heart, and would not let him go.
Sweet was the scene! apart the cedars stood,
A sunny islet open'd in the wood;
With vernal tints the wild-briar thicket glows,
For here the desert flourish'd as the rose;

From sapling trees, with lucid foliage crown'd,
Gay lights and shadows twinkled on the ground;
Up the tall stems luxuriant creepers run
To hang their silver blossoms in the sun;
Deep velvet verdure clad the turf beneath,
Where trodden flowers their richest odours breathe;
O'er all the Bees, with murmuring music, flew
From bell to bell, to sip the treasured dew;
While insect myriads, in the solar gleams,
Glanced to and fro, like intermingling beams;
So fresh, so pure, the woods, the sky, the air,
It seem'd a place where angels might repair,
And tune their harps beneath those tranquil shades,
To morning songs, or moonlight serenades.

He paused again, with memory's dream entranced:
Again his foot unconsciously advanced,
For now the laurel-thicket caught his view,
Where he and Zillah wept their last adieu.

Some curious hand, since that bereaving hour,
Had twined the copse into a covert bower,
With many a light and fragrant shrub between,
Flowering aloft amidst perennial green.
As Javan search'd this blossom-woven shade,
He spied the semblance of a sleeping Maid;
'Tis she; 'tis Zillah, in her leafy shrine;
O'erwatch'd in slumber by a power divine,
In cool retirement from the heat of day,
Alone, unfearing, on the moss she lay,
Fair as the rainbow shines thro' darkening showers,
Pure as a wreath of snow on April flowers.

O youth! in later times, whose gentle ear
This tale of ancient constancy shall hear;
If thou hast known the sweetness and the pain,
To love with secret hope, yet love in vain;
If months and years in pining silence worn,
Till doubt and fear might be no longer borne,

In evening shades thy faltering tongue confess'd
The last dear wish that trembled in thy breast,
While at each pause the streamlet purl'd along,
And rival woodlands echoed song for song;
Recall the Maiden's look;— the eye, the cheek,
The blush that spoke what language could not speak;
Recall her look, when at the altar's side
She seal'd her promise, and became thy bride.
Such were to Javan, Zillah's form and face,
The flower of meekness on a stem of grace;
O, she was all that Youth of Beauty deems,
All that to Love the loveliest object seems.

Moments there are, that, in their sudden flight,
Bring the slow mysteries of years to light;
Javan, in one transporting instant, knew,
That all he wish'd, and all he fear'd was true:
For while the harlot-world his soul possess'd,
Love seem'd a crime in his apostate breast;

How could he tempt her innocence to share
His poor ambition, and his fix'd despair!
But now the phantoms of a wandering brain,
And wounded spirit, cross'd his thoughts in vain:
Past sins and follies, cares and woes forgot,
Peace, virtue, Zillah, seem'd his present lot;
Where'er he look'd, around him or above,
All was the pledge of Truth, the work of Love,
At whose transforming hand, where last they stood,
Had sprung that lone memorial in the wood.

Thus on the slumbering maid while Javan gazed,
With quicker swell her hidden bosom raised
The shadowy tresses, that profusely shed
Their golden wreaths from her reclining head;
A deeper crimson mantled o'er her cheek,
Her close lip quiver'd, as in act to speak,
While broken sobs, and tremors of unrest,
The inward trouble of a dream express'd:

At length, amidst imperfect murmurs, fell
The name of "Javan!" and a low "farewell!"
Tranquil again, her cheek resumed its hue,
And soft as infancy her breath she drew.

When Javan's ear those startling accents thrill'd,
Wonder and ecstasy his bosom fill'd;
But quick compunction humbler feelings wrought,
He blush'd to be a spy on Zillah's thought;
He turn'd aside; within the neighbouring brake,
Resolved to tarry till the nymph awake,
There, as in luxury of thought reclined,
A calm of tenderness composed his mind;
His stringless harp upon the turf was thrown,
And on a pipe of most mellifluous tone,
Framed by himself, the musing Minstrel play'd,
To charm the slumberer, cloister'd in the shade.
Jubal had taught the lyre's responsive string,
Beneath the rapture of his touch to sing;

And bade the trumpet wake, with bolder breath,
The joy of battle in the field of death;
But Javan first, whom pure affection fired,
With Love's clear eloquence the flute inspired;
At once obedient to the lip and hand,
It utter'd every feeling at command.
Light o'er the stops his airy fingers flew,
A spirit spoke in every tone they drew;
'Twas now the skylark on the wings of morn,
Now the night-warbler leaning on her thorn;
Anon through every pulse the music stole,
And held sublime communion with the soul,
Wrung from the coyest breast the unprison'd sigh,
And kindled rapture in the coldest eye.

Thus on his dulcet pipe while Javan play'd,
Within her bower awoke the conscious maid;
She, in her dream, by varying fancies crost,
Had hail'd her wanderer found, and mourn'd him lost:

In one wild vision, midst a land unknown,
By a dark river, as she sat alone,
Javan beyond the stream dejected stood;
He spied her soon, and leapt into the flood;
The thwarting current urged him down its course,
But Love repell'd it with victorious force;
She ran to help him landing, where as length
He struggled up the bank with failing strength;
She caught his hand; — when, downward from the day,
A water-monster dragg'd the youth away;
She follow'd headlong, but her garments bore
Her form, light floating, till she saw no more:
For suddenly the dream's delusion changed,
And through a blooming wilderness she ranged;
Alone she seem'd, but not alone she walk'd,
Javan, invisible, beside her talk'd.
He told, how he had journied many a year
With changing seasons in their swift career,

Danced with the breezes in the bowers of morn,
Slept in the valley where new moons are born,
Rode with the planets, on their golden cars,
Round the blue world inhabited by stars,
And, bathing in the sun's crystalline streams,
Became ethereal spirit in the beams,
Whence were his lineaments, from mortal sight,
Absorb'd in pure transparency of light;
But now, his pilgrimage of glory past,
In Eden's vale he sought repose at last.
— The voice was mystery to Zillah's ear,
Not speech, nor song, yet full, melodious, clear;
No sounds of winds or waters, birds or bees,
Were e'er so exquisitely tuned to please.
Then while she sought him with desiring eyes,
The airy Javan darted from disguise,
Full on her view a stranger's visage broke;
She fled, she fell, he caught her, — she awoke.

Awoke from sleep, — but in her solitude
Found the enchantment of her dream renew'd;
That living voice, so full, melodious, clear,
That voice of mystery warbled in her ear.
Yet words no longer wing the trembling notes,
Unearthly, inexpressive music floats,
In liquid tones so voluble and wild,
Her senses seem by slumber still beguiled:
Alarm'd she started from her lonely den,
But, blushing, instantly retired again;
The viewless phantom came in sound so near,
The stranger of her dream might next appear.
Javan, conceal'd behind the verdant brake,
Felt his lip fail, and strength his hand forsake;
Then dropt his flute, and while he lay at rest
Heard every pulse that travell'd through his breast.
Zillah, who deem'd the strange illusion fled,
Now from the laurel-arbour show'd her head,
Her eye quick-glancing round, as if in thought,
Recoiling from the object that she sought:

By slow degrees, to Javan in the shade,
The emerging nymph her perfect shape display'd.
Time had but touch'd her form to finer grace,
Years had but shed their favours on her face,
While secret Love, and unrewarded Truth,
Like cold clear dew upon the rose of youth,
Gave to the springing flower a chasten'd bloom,
And shut from rifling winds its coy perfume.

Words cannot paint the wonder of her look,
When once again his pipe the Minstrel took,
And soft in under-tones began to play,
Like the caged woodlark's low-lamenting lay:
Then loud and shrill, by stronger breath impell'd,
To higher strains the undaunted music swell'd,
Till new-born echoes through the forest rang,
And birds, at noon, in broken slumbers sang,
Bewildering transport, infantine surprise,
Throbb'd in her bosom, sparkled in her eyes.

O'er every feature every feeling shone,
Her colour changed as Javan changed his tone:
While she between the bower and brake entranced,
Alternately retreated or advanced;
Sometimes the lessening cadence seem'd to fly,
Then the full melody came rolling nigh;
She shrunk, or follow'd still, with eye and feet,
Afraid to lose it, more afraid to meet;
For yet through Eden's land, by fame alone,
Jubal's harmonious minstrelsy was known,
Though nobler songs than cheer'd the Patriarchs' glen
Never resounded from the lips of men.

Silence, at length, the listening Maiden broke;
The heart of Javan check'd him while she spoke:
Though sweeter than his pipe her accents stole.
He durst not learn the tumult of her soul,
But, closely cowering in his ambuscade,
With sprightlier breath and nimbler finger play'd.

— " 'Tis not the nightingale that sang so well,
When Javan left me near this lonely cell;
'Tis not indeed the nightingale; — her voice
Could never since that hour my soul rejoice:
Some bird from Paradise hath lost her way,
And carols here a long-forbidden lay;
For ne'er since Eve's transgression, mortal ear
Was privileged such heavenly sounds to hear;
Perhaps an Angel, while he rests his wings,
On earth alighting, here his descant sings;
Methinks those tones, so full of joy and love,
Must be the language of the world above!
Within this brake he rests:" With curious ken,
As if she fear'd to stir a lion's den,
Breathless, on tiptoe, round the copse she crept;
Her heart beat quicker, louder as she stept,
Till Javan rose, and fix'd on her his eyes,
In dumb embarrassment, and feign'd surprise;
Upright she started, at the sudden view,
Back from her brow the scatter'd ringlets flew.

Paleness a moment overspread her face;
But fear to frank astonishment gave place,
And with the virgin-blush of innocence,
She ask'd, — " Who art thou, Stranger, and from whence?"

With mild demeanor, and with downcast eye,
Javan, advancing, humbly made reply;
— " A Wretch, escaping from the tribes of men,
Seeks an asylum in the Patriarchs' glen;
As through the forest's breathless gloom I stray'd,
Up sprang the breeze in this delicious shade;
Then, while I sate beneath the rustling tree,
I waked this pipe to wildest minstrelsy,
Child of my fancy, framed with Jubal's art,
To breathe at will the fulness of my heart:
Fairest of Women! if the clamour rude
Hath scared the quiet of thy solitude,
Forgive the innocent offence, and tell,
How far beyond these woods the righteous dwell." —

Though changed his voice, his look and stature changed,
In air and garb, in all but love estranged,
Still in the youthful exile Zillah sought
A dear lost friend, for ever near her thought!
Yet answer'd coldly, — jealous and afraid
Her heart might be mistaken, or betray'd.
— " Not far from hence the faithful race reside;
Pilgrim! to whom shall I thy footsteps guide?
Alike to all, if thou an alien be,
My father's home invites thee; follow me."

She spoke with such a thought-divining look,
Colour his lip, and power his tongue forsook;
At length, in hesitating tone, and low,
— " Enoch," said he, " the friend of God I know.
To him I bear a message full of fear;
I may not rest till he vouchsafe to hear."

He paused; his cheek with red confusion burn'd;
Kindness through her relenting breast return'd:
— "Behold the path," she cried, and led the way;
Ere long the vale unbosom'd to the day:
— "Yonder, where two embracing oaks are seen,
Arch'd o'er a cottage-roof, that peeps between,
Dwells Enoch; Stranger! peace attend thee there,
My father's sheep demand his daughter's care."

Javan was so rebuked beneath her eye,
She vanish'd ere he falter'd a reply,
And sped, while he in cold amazement stood,
Along the winding border of the wood;
Now lost, now re-appearing, as the glade
Shone to the sun, or darken'd in the shade,
He saw, but might not follow, where her flock
Were wont to rest at noon, beneath a rock.
He knew the willowy champaign, and the stream,
Of many an early lay the simple theme,

Chanted in Boyhood's unsuspecting hours,
When Zillah join'd the song, or praised his powers.
Thither he watch'd her, while her course she bore,
Nor ceased to gaze, when she was seen no more.

END OF THE SECOND CANTO.

THE

WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD.

CANTO THIRD.

Javan's Soliloquy on Zillah's Desertion of him. He reaches the Ruins of his Mother's Cottage. Thence he proceeds to Enoch's Dwelling. His Reception there. Enoch and Javan proceed together towards the Place of Sacrifice. Description of the Patriarchs' Glen; — Occasion of the Family of Seth retiring thither at first.

" Am I so changed by suffering, so forgot,
That love disowns me, Zillah knows me not?
Ah! no; she shrinks from my disastrous fate;
She dare not love me, and she cannot hate:
'Tis just; I merit this: — When Nature's womb
Ingulf'd my kindred in one common tomb,

Why was I spared? — A reprobate by birth,
To heaven rebellious, unallied on earth,
Whither, O whither shall the outcast flee?
There is no home, no peace, no hope for me.
I hate the worldling's vanity and noise,
I have no fellow-feeling in his joys;
The saint's serener bliss I cannot share,
My Soul, alas! hath no communion there.
This is the portion of my cup below,
Silent, unmingled, solitary woe;
To bear from clime to clime the curse of Cain,
Sin with remorse, yet find repentance vain;
And cling, in blank despair, from breath to breath,
To nought in life, except the fear of Death."—

While Javan gave his bitter passion vent,
And wander'd on, unheeding where he went,
His feet, instinctive, led him to the spot,
Where rose the ruins of his Childhood's cot:

Here, as he halted in abrupt surprise,
His Mother seem'd to vanish from his eyes,
As if her gentle form, unmark'd before,
Had stood to greet him at the wonted door;
Yet did the pale retiring Spirit dart
A look of tenderness that broke his heart:
'Twas but a thought, arrested on its flight,
And bodied forth with visionary light,
But chill the life-blood ran through every vein,
The fire of frenzy faded from his brain,
He cast himself in terror on the ground:
— Slowly recovering strength, he gazed around,
In wistful silence, eyed those walls decay'd,
Between whose chinks the lively lizard play'd;
The moss-clad timbers, loose and lapsed awry,
Threatening ere long in wider wreck to lie;
The fractured roof, through which the sun-beams shone,
With rank unflowering verdure overgrown;

The prostrate fragments of the wicker-door,
And reptile traces on the damp green floor.
This mournful spectacle while Javan view'd,
Life's earliest scenes and trials were renew'd;
O'er his dark mind, the light of years gone by,
Gleam'd, like the meteors of a northern sky.
He moved his lips, but strove in vain to speak,
A few slow tears stray'd down his cold wan cheek,
Till from his breast a sigh convulsive sprung,
And " O my mother!" trembled from his tongue.
That name, though but a murmur, that dear name
Touch'd every kind affection into flame;
Despondency assumed a milder form,
A ray of comfort darted through the storm;
" O God! be merciful to me!" — He said,
Arose, and straight to Enoch's dwelling sped.

Enoch, who sate, to taste the freshening breeze,
Beneath the shadow of his cottage-trees,

Beheld the youth approaching; and his eye,
Instructed by the light of prophecy,
Knew from afar, beneath the stranger's air,
The orphan object of his tenderest care;
Forth, with a father's joy, the holy man
To meet the poor returning pilgrim ran,
Fell on his neck, and kiss'd him, wept, and cried,
"My Son! my Son!"—but Javan shrunk aside;
The Patriarch raised, embraced him, oft withdrew
His head to gaze, then wept and clasp'd anew.
The mourner bow'd with agony of shame,
Clung round his knees, and call'd upon his name.
—"Father! behold a supplicant in me,
A sinner in the sight of heaven and thee;
Yet for thy former love, may Javan live;
O, for the mother's sake, the son forgive!—
The meanest office, and the lowest seat,
In Enoch's house be mine, at Enoch's feet."

" Come to my home, my bosom, and my rest,
Not as a stranger, and way-faring guest;
My bread of peace, my cup of blessings share,
Child of my faith! and answer to my prayer!
O, I have wept through many a night for thee,
And watch'd through many a day *this* day to see.
Crown'd is the hope of my desiring heart,
I am resign'd, and ready to depart:
With joy I hail my course of nature run,
Since I have seen thy face, my son! my son!"

So saying, Enoch led to his abode
The trembling penitent, along the road
That through the garden's gay inclosure wound;
Midst fruits and flowers the Patriarch's spouse they found,
Plucking the purple clusters from the vine,
To crown the cup of unfermented wine.
She came to meet them; — but in strange surmise
Stopt, and on Javan fix'd her earnest eyes;

He kneel'd to greet her hand with wonted grace —
Ah! then she knew him! — as he bow'd his face,
His mother's features in a glimpse she caught,
And the son's image rush'd upon her thought;
Pale she recoil'd with momentary fright,
As if a spirit had ris'n before her sight,
Returning, with a heart too full to speak,
She pour'd a flood of tears upon his cheek,
Then laugh'd for gladness, — but her laugh was wild;
— "Where hast thou been, my own, my orphan child?
Child of my soul! bequeath'd in death to me,
By her who had no other wealth than thee!"
She cried, and with a Mother's love caress'd
The Youth, who wept in silence on her breast.

This hasty tumult of affection o'er,
They pass'd within the hospitable door;
There on a grassy couch, with joy o'ercome,
Pensive with awe, with veneration dumb,

Javan reclined, while kneeling at his seat,
The humble Patriarch wash'd the traveller's feet.
Quickly the Spouse her plenteous table spread
With homely viands, milk and fruits and bread.
Ere long the guest, grown innocently bold,
With simple eloquence, his story told;
His sins, his follies, frankly were reveal'd,
And nothing but his nameless love conceal'd.
—"While thus," he cried, "I proved the world a snare,
Pleasure a serpent, Fame a cloud in air;
While with the sons of men my footsteps trod,
My home, my heart was with the Sons of God."

"Went not my spirit with thee," Enoch said,
"When from the Mother's grave the Orphan fled?
Others believed thee slain by beasts of blood,
Or self-devoted to the strangling flood,
(Too plainly in thy grief-bewilder'd mien,
By every eye, a breaking heart was seen;)

I mourn'd in secret thine apostasy,
Nor ceased to intercede with Heaven for thee.
Strong was my faith, in dreams or waking thought,
Oft as thine image o'er my mind was brought,
I deem'd thee living by this conscious sign,
The deep communion of my soul with thine.
This day a voice, that thrill'd my breast with fear,
(Methought 'twas Adam's) whisper'd in mine ear,
— 'Enoch! ere thrice the morning meet the sun,
Thy joy shall be fulfill'd, thy rest begun.' —
While yet those tones were murmuring in air,
I turn'd to look, — but saw no speaker there:
Thought I not then of thee, my long-lost joy?
Leapt not my heart abroad to meet my boy?
Yes! and while still I sate beneath the tree,
Revolving what the signal meant to me,
I spied thee coming, and with eager feet
Ran, the returning fugitive to greet:
Nor less the welcome art thou, since I know
By this high warning, that from earth I go;

My days are number'd; peace on thine attend!
The trial comes, — be faithful to the end."

" O live the years of Adam!" cried the youth;
" Yet seem thy words to breathe prophetic truth:
Sire! while I roam'd the world, a transient guest,
From sunrise to the ocean of the west,
I found that sin, where'er the foot of man
Nature's primeval wilderness o'er-ran,
Had track'd his steps, and through advancing Time
Urged the deluded race from crime to crime,
Till wrath and strife, in fratricidal war,
Gather'd the force of nations from afar,
To deal and suffer Death's unheeded blow,
As if the curse on Adam were too slow.
Even now an host, like locusts on their way,
That desolate the earth, and dim the day,
Led by a Giant-King, whose arm hath broke
Remotest realms to wear his iron yoke,

Hover o'er Eden, resolute to close
His final triumph o'er his latest foes;
A feeble band, that in their covert lie,
Like cowering doves beneath the falcon's eye.
That easy and ignoble conquest won,
There yet remains one fouler deed undone.
Oft have I heard the tyrant in his ire,
Devote this glen to massacre and fire,
And swear to root, from Earth's dishonour'd face,
The last least relic of the faithful race;
Thenceforth he hopes, on God's terrestrial throne
To rule the nether universe alone.
Wherefore, O Sire! when evening shuts the sky,
Fly with thy kindred, from destruction fly;
Far to the south, unpeopled wilds of wood
Skirt the dark borders of Euphrates' flood;
There shall the Patriarchs find secure repose,
Till Eden rest, forsaken of her foes."

At Javan's speech the Matron's cheek grew pale,
Her courage, not her faith, began to fail;
Eve's youngest daughter she; the silent tear
Witness'd her patience, but betray'd her fear.
Then answered Enoch, with a smile serene,
That shed celestial beauty o'er his mien;
" Here is mine earthly habitation; here
I wait till my Redeemer shall appear;
Death and the face of man I dare not shun,
God is my refuge, and His will be done."

The Matron check'd her uncomplaining sigh,
And wiped the drop that trembled in her eye.
Javan with shame and self-abasement blush'd,
But every care at Enoch's smile was hush'd:
He felt the power of truth; his heart o'erflow'd,
And in his look sublime devotion glow'd.
Westward the Patriarch turn'd his tranquil face;
" The Sun," said he, " hath well nigh run his race:

I to the yearly sacrifice repair,
Our Brethren meet me at the place of prayer."

" I follow: O, my father! I am thine;
Thy God, thy people, and thine altar mine!"
Exclaim'd the youth, on highest thoughts intent,
And forth with Enoch through the valley went.

Deep was that valley, girt with rock and wood:
In rural groups the scatter'd hamlet stood;
Tents, arbours, cottages, adorn'd the scene,
Gardens and fields, and shepherds' walks between;
Through all, a streamlet, from its mountain-source,
Seen but by stealth, pursued its willowy course.

When first the mingling sons of God and man
The demon-sacrifice of war began,
Self-exiled here, the family of Seth
Renounced a world of violence and death,

Faithful alone amidst the faithless found,*
And innocent while murder cursed the ground.
Here, in retirement from profane mankind,
They worshipp'd God with purity of mind,
Fed their small flocks, and till'd their narrow soil,
Like parent Adam, with submissive toil,
— Adam, whose eyes their pious hands had closed,
Whose bones beneath their quiet turf reposed.
No glen like this, unstain'd with human blood,
Could youthful nature boast before the flood;
Far less shall Earth, now hastening to decay,
A scene of sweeter loneliness display,
Where nought was heard but sounds of peace and love,
Nor seen but woods around, and heaven above.

* "So spake the Seraph Abdiel, faithful found
Among the faithless, faithful only he."
PAR. LOST, Book V.

Yet not in cold and unconcern'd content,
Their years in that delicious range were spent;
Oft from their haunts the fervent Patriarchs broke,
In strong affection to their kindred spoke,
With tears and prayers reproved their growing crimes,
Or told the impending judgments of the times.
In vain; the world despised the warning word,
With scorn belied it, or with mockery heard,
Forbade the zealous monitors to roam,
And stoned, or chased them to their forest home.
There, from the depth of solitude, their sighs
Pleaded with heaven in ceaseless sacrifice,
And long did righteous heaven the guilty spare,
Won by the holy violence of prayer.

Yet sharper pangs of unavailing woe,
Those Sires in secresy were doom'd to know;
Oft by the world's alluring snares misled,
Their youth from that sequester'd valley fled,

Join'd the wild herd, increased the godless crew,
And left the virtuous remnant weak and few.

END OF THE THIRD CANTO.

THE

WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD.

CANTO FOURTH.

Enoch relates to Javan the Circumstances of the Death of Adam, including his Appointment of an annual Sacrifice on the Day of his Transgression and Fall in Paradise.

THUS through the valley, while they held their walk,
Enoch of former days began to talk,
— " Thou know'st our place of sacrifice and prayer,
Javan ! for thou wert wont to worship there :
Built by our father's venerable hands,
On the same spot our ancient altar stands,
Where, driven from Eden's hallow'd groves, he found
A home on earth's unconsecrated ground ;

Whence too, his pilgrimage of trial o'er,
He reach'd the rest which sin can break no more.
Oft hast thou heard our elder Patriarchs tell
How Adam once by disobedience fell;
Would that my tongue were gifted to display
The terror and the glory of that day,
When seized and stricken by the hand of Death,
The first transgressor yielded up his breath!
Nigh threescore years, with interchanging light,
The host of heaven have measured day and night,
Since we beheld the ground, from which he rose,
On his returning dust in silence close.

" With him his noblest sons might not compare,
In godlike feature and majestic air;
Not out of weakness rose his gradual frame,
Perfect from his Creator's hand he came;
And as in form excelling, so in mind
The Sire of men transcended all mankind;

A soul was in his eye, and in his speech
A dialect of heaven no art could reach;
For oft of old to him, the evening breeze
Had borne the voice of God among the trees;
Angels were wont their songs with his to blend,
And talk with him as their familiar friend.
But deep remorse for that mysterious crime,
Whose dire contagion through elapsing time
Diffused the curse of death beyond controul,
Had wrought such self-abasement in his soul,
That he, whose honours were approach'd by none,
Was yet the meekest man beneath the sun.
From sin, as from the serpent that betray'd
Eve's early innocence, he shrunk afraid;
Vice he rebuked with so austere a frown,
He seem'd to bring an instant judgment down;
Yet while he chid, compunctious tears would start,
And yearning tenderness dissolve his heart;
The guilt of all his race became his own,
He suffer'd as if *he* had sinn'd alone.

Within our glen to filial love endear'd,
Abroad for wisdom, truth and justice fear'd,
He walk'd so humbly in the sight of all,
The vilest ne'er reproach'd him with his fall.
Children were his delight; — they ran to meet
His soothing hand, and clasp his honour'd feet;
While 'midst their fearless sports supremely blest,
He grew in heart a child among the rest:
Yet as a Parent, nought beneath the sky
Touch'd him so quickly as an infant's eye:
Joy from its smile of happiness he caught;
Its flash of rage sent horror through his thought:
His smitten conscience felt as fierce a pain,
As if he fell from innocence again.

" One morn I track'd him on his lonely way,
Pale as the gleam of slow-awakening day;
With feeble step he climb'd yon craggy height,
Thence fix'd on distant Paradise his sight;

He gazed awhile in silent thought profound,
Then falling prostrate on the dewy ground,
He pour'd his spirit in a flood of prayer,
Bewail'd his ancient crime with self-despair,
And claim'd the pledge of reconciling grace,
The promised Seed, the Saviour of his race.
Wrestling with God, as Nature's vigour fail'd,
His faith grew stronger and his plea prevail'd,
The prayer from agony to rapture rose,
And sweet as Angel accents fell the close.
I stood to greet him: when he raised his head,
Divine expression o'er his visage spread;
His presence was so saintly to behold,
He seem'd in sinless Paradise grown old.

" — 'This day,' said he, 'in Time's star-lighted round,
Renews the anguish of that mortal wound
On me inflicted, when the Serpent's tongue
My Spouse with his beguiling falsehood stung.

Though years of grace through centuries have pass'd,
Since my transgression, this may be my last;
Infirmities without, and fears within,
Foretell the consummating stroke of sin;
The hour, the place, the form to me unknown,
But God, who lent me life, *will* claim his own;
Then, lest I sink as suddenly in death,
As quicken'd into being by his breath,
Once more I climb'd these rocks with weary pace,
And but once more, to view my native place,
To bid yon garden of delight farewell,
The earthly Paradise from which I fell.
This mantle, Enoch! which I yearly wear
To mark the day of penitence and prayer,—
These skins, the covering of my first offence,
When conscious of departed innocence,
Naked and trembling from my Judge I fled,
A hand of mercy o'er my vileness spread;—
Enoch! this mantle thus vouchsafed to me,
At my dismission I bequeath to thee;

Wear it in sad memorial on this day,
And yearly at mine earliest altar slay
A lamb immaculate, whose blood be spilt
In sign of wrath removed and cancell'd guilt:
So be the sins of all my race confest,
So on their heads may peace and pardon rest.'
— Thus spake our Sire, and down the steep descent
With strengthen'd heart, and fearless footstep went:
O Javan! when we parted at his door,
I loved him as I never loved before.

"Ere noon, returning to his bower, I found
Our father labouring in his harvest ground
(For yet he till'd a little plot of soil,
Patient and pleased with voluntary toil);
But O how changed from him, whose morning eye
Outshone the star, that told the sun was nigh!
Loose in his feeble grasp the sickle shook;
I mark'd the ghastly dolour of his look,

And ran to help him; but his latest strength
Fail'd; — prone upon his sheaves he fell at length:
I strove to raise him; sight and sense were fled,
Nerveless his limbs, and backward sway'd his head.
Seth pass'd; I call'd him, and we bore our Sire
To neighbouring shades from noon's afflictive fire:
Ere long he 'woke to feeling, with a sigh,
And half unclosed his hesitating eye;
Strangely and timidly he peer'd around,
Like men in dreams whom sudden lights confound:
— 'Is this a new Creation? — Have I pass'd
The bitterness of death?' — He look'd aghast,
Then sorrowful; — 'No; men and trees appear;
'Tis not a new Creation, — pain is here:
From Sin's dominion is there no release?
Lord! let thy Servant *now* depart in peace.'
— Hurried remembrance crowding o'er his soul,
He knew us; tears of consternation stole

Down his pale cheeks: — 'Seth! — Enoch!
Where is Eve?
How could the spouse her dying consort leave?'

"Eve look'd that moment from their cottage-door
In quest of Adam, where he toil'd before;
He was not there; she call'd him by his name;
Sweet to his ear the well-known accents came;
— 'Here am I,' answer'd he, in tone so weak,
That we who held him scarcely heard him speak;
But, resolutely bent to rise, in vain
He struggled till he swoon'd away with pain.
Eve call'd again, and turning tow'rds the shade,
Helpless as infancy, beheld him laid;
She sprang, as smitten with a mortal wound,
Forward, and cast herself upon the ground
At Adam's feet; half rising in despair,
Him from our arms she wildly strove to tear;
Repell'd by gentle violence, she press'd
His powerless hand to her convulsive breast,

And kneeling, bending o'er him, full of fears,
Warm on his bosom shower'd her silent tears.
Light to his eyes at that refreshment came,
They open'd on her in a transient flame;
— 'And art thou here, my Life! my Love!' he cried,
'Faithful in death to this congenial side?
Thus let me bind thee to my breaking heart,
One dear, one bitter moment, ere we part.'
— 'Leave me not, Adam! leave me not below;
With thee I tarry, or with thee I go,'
She said, and yielding to his faint embrace,
Clung round his neck, and wept upon his face.
Alarming recollection soon return'd,
His fever'd frame with growing anguish burn'd:
Ah! then, as Nature's tenderest impulse wrought,
With fond solicitude of love she sought
To soothe his limbs upon their grassy bed,
And make the pillow easy to his head;

She wiped his reeking temples with her hair;
She shook the leaves to stir the sleeping air;
Moisten'd his lips with kisses: with her breath
Vainly essay'd to quell the fire of Death,
That ran and revell'd through his swollen veins
With quicker pulses, and severer pains.

"The sun, in summer majesty on high,
Darted his fierce effulgence down the sky;
Yet dimm'd and blunted were the dazzling rays,
His orb expanded through a dreary haze,
And, circled with a red portentous zone,
He look'd in sickly horror from his throne:
The vital air was still; the torrid heat
Oppress'd our hearts, that labour'd hard to beat.
When higher noon had shrunk the lessening shade,
Thence to his home our father we convey'd,
And stretch'd him, pillow'd with his latest sheaves,
On a fresh couch of green and fragrant leaves.

Here, though his sufferings through the glen were known,
We chose to watch his dying bed alone,
Eve, Seth, and I. —— In vain he sigh'd for rest,
And oft his meek complainings thus express'd:
— 'Blow on me, Wind! I faint with heat! O bring
Delicious water from the deepest spring;
Your sunless shadows o'er my limbs diffuse,
Ye Cedars! wash me cold with midnight dews.
— Cheer me, my friends! with looks of kindness cheer;
Whisper a word of comfort in mine ear;
Those sorrowing faces fill my soul with gloom;
This silence is the silence of the tomb.
Thither I hasten; help me on my way;
O sing to soothe me, and to strengthen pray!'
We sang to soothe him, — hopeless was the song;
We pray'd to strengthen him, — he grew not strong.
In vain from every herb, and fruit, and flower,
Of cordial sweetness, or of healing power,

We press'd the virtue; no terrestrial balm
Nature's dissolving agony could calm.
Thus as the day declined, the fell disease
Eclipsed the light of life by slow degrees:
Yet while his pangs grew sharper, more resign'd,
More self-collected, grew the sufferer's mind;
Patient of heart, though rack'd at every pore,
The righteous penalty of sin he bore;
Not his the fortitude that mocks at pains,
But that which feels them most, and yet sustains.
— 'Tis just, 'tis merciful,' we heard him say;
'Yet wherefore hath He turn'd his face away?
I see Him not; I hear Him not; I call;
My God! my God! support me, or I fall.'

"The sun went down, amidst an angry glare
Of flushing clouds, that crimson'd all the air;
The winds brake loose; the forest boughs were torn,
And dark aloof the eddying foliage borne;

Cattle to shelter scudded in affright;
The florid evening vanish'd into night:
Then burst the hurricane upon the vale,
In peals of thunder, and thick-vollied hail;
Prone rushing rains with torrents whelm'd the land,
Our cot amidst a river seem'd to stand;
Around its base, the foamy-crested streams
Flash'd through the darkness to the lightning's gleams,
With monstrous throes an earthquake heaved the ground,
The rocks were rent, the mountains trembled round;
Never since Nature into being came,
Had such mysterious motion shook her frame;
We thought, ingulf'd in floods, or wrapt in fire,
The world itself would perish with our Sire.

"Amidst this war of elements, within
More dreadful grew the sacrifice of sin,
Whose victim on his bed of torture lay,
Breathing the slow remains of life away.

Erewhile, victorious faith sublimer rose
Beneath the pressure of collected woes:
But now his spirit waver'd, went and came,
Like the loose vapour of departing flame,
Till at the point, when comfort seem'd to die
For ever in his fix'd unclosing eye,
Bright through the smouldering ashes of the man,
The saint brake forth, and Adam thus began:

"— 'O ye, that shudder at this awful strife,
This wrestling agony of Death and Life,
Think not that He, on whom my soul is cast,
Will leave me thus forsaken to the last;
Nature's infirmity alone you see;
My chains are breaking, I shall soon be free;
Though firm in God the Spirit holds her trust,
The flesh is frail, and trembles into dust.
Horror and anguish seize me;— 'tis the hour
Of darkness, and I mourn beneath its power;

The Tempter plies me with his direst art,
I feel the Serpent coiling round my heart;
He stirs the wound he once inflicted there,
Instils the deadening poison of despair,
Belies the truth of God's delaying grace,
And bids me curse my Maker to his face.
— I will not curse Him, though his grace delay;
I will not cease to trust Him, though he slay;
Full on his promised mercy I rely,
For God hath spoken, — God, who cannot lie.
— Thou, of my faith the Author and the End!
Mine early, late, and everlasting Friend!
The joy, that once thy presence gave, restore
Ere I am summon'd hence, and seen no more:
Down to the dust returns this earthly frame,
Receive my Spirit, Lord! from whom it came;
Rebuke the Tempter, show thy power to save,
O let thy glory light me to the grave,
That these, who witness my departing breath,
May learn to triumph in the grasp of Death.'

"He closed his eyelids with a tranquil smile,
And seem'd to rest in silent prayer awhile:
Around his couch with filial awe we kneel'd,
When suddenly a light from heaven reveal'd
A Spirit, that stood within the unopen'd door;—
The sword of God in his right hand he bore;
His countenance was lightning, and his vest
Like snow at sunrise on the mountain's crest;
Yet so benignly beautiful his form,
His presence still'd the fury of the storm;
At once the winds retire, the waters cease;
His look was love, his salutation, 'Peace!'

"Our Mother first beheld him, sore amazed,
But terror grew to transport, while she gazed:
—'Tis He, the Prince of Seraphim, who drove
Our banish'd feet from Eden's happy grove; *

* Paradise Lost, Book XI. v. 238.

Adam, my Life, my Spouse, awake!' she cried;
'Return to Paradise; behold thy Guide!
O let me follow in this dear embrace!'
She sunk, and on his bosom hid her face.
Adam look'd up; his visage changed its hue,
Transform'd into an Angel's at the view:
'I come!' he cried, with faith's full triumph fired,
And in a sigh of ecstasy expired.
The light was vanish'd, and the vision fled;
We stood alone, the living with the dead;
The ruddy embers, glimmering round the room,
Display'd the corpse amidst the solemn gloom;
But o'er the scene a holy calm reposed,
The gate of heaven had open'd there, and closed.

"Eve's faithful arm still clasp'd her lifel
Spouse;
Gently I shook it, from her trance to rouse;
She gave no answer; motionless and cold,
It fell like clay from my relaxing hold;

Alarm'd, I lifted up the locks of grey
That hid her cheek; her soul had passed away:
A beauteous corse she graced her partner's side,
Love bound their lives, and Death could not divide.

" Trembling astonishment of grief we felt,
Till Nature's sympathies began to melt;
We wept in stillness through the long dark night;
— And O how welcome was the morning light!"

END OF THE FOURTH CANTO.

THE

WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD.

CANTO FIFTH.

The Burying-Place of the Patriarchs. The Sacrifice on the Anniversary of the Fall of Adam. Enoch's Prophecy.

" And here," said Enoch, with dejected eye,
" Behold the grave, in which our Parents lie."
They stopp'd, and o'er the turf-inclosure wept,
Where, side by side, the First-Created slept:
It seem'd as if a voice, with still small sound,
Heard in their bosoms, issued from that mound:
— ' From earth we came, and we return'd to earth;
Descendants! spare the Dust that gave you birth;

Though Death, the pain for our transgression due,
By sad inheritance we left to you,
O let our Children bless us in our grave,
And Man forgive the wrong that God forgave!'

Thence to the altar Enoch turn'd his face;
But Javan linger'd in that burying-place,
A scene sequester'd from the haunts of men,
The loveliest nook of all that lovely glen,
Where weary pilgrims found their last repose:
The little heaps were ranged in comely rows,
With walks between, by friends and kindred trod,
Who dress'd with duteous hands each hallow'd sod:
No sculptured monument was taught to breathe
His praises, whom the worm devour'd beneath;
The high, the low, the mighty, and the fair,
Equal in death, were undistinguish'd there;
Yet not a hillock moulder'd near that spot,
By one dishonour'd or by all forgot;

To some warm heart the poorest dust was dear,
From some kind eye, the meanest claim'd a tear.
And oft the living, by affection led,
Were wont to walk in spirit with their dead,
Where no dark cypress cast a doleful gloom,
No blighting yew shed poison o'er the tomb,
But, white and red with intermingling flowers,
The graves look'd beautiful in sun and showers.
Green myrtles fenced it, and beyond their bound
Ran the clear rill with ever-murmuring sound;
'Twas not a scene for Grief to nourish care,
It breathed of Hope, and moved the heart to prayer.

Why linger'd Javan in that lone retreat?
The shrine of her that bare him drew his feet;
Trembling he sought it, fearing to behold
A bed of thistles, or unsightly mould;
But, lo! the turf, which his own hands had piled,
With choicest flowers, and richset verdure smiled:

By all the glen, his mother's couch of rest,
In his default, was visited and blest.
He kneel'd, he kiss'd it, full of love and woe;
His heart was where his treasure lay, below;
And long he tarried, ere, with heav'nward eyes,
He rose, and hasten'd to the sacrifice.

Already on a neighbouring mount, that stood
Apart amidst the valley, girt with wood,
Whose open summit rising o'er the trees,
Caught the cool fragrance of the evening breeze,
The Patriarchal Worshippers were met;
The Lamb was brought, the wood in order set
On Adam's rustic altar, moss-o'ergrown,
An unwrought mass of earth-embedded stone,
Long known and hallow'd, where, for man's offence,
The earth first drank the blood of innocence,
When God himself ordain'd the typic rite
To Eden's Exiles, resting on their flight.

Foremost, amidst the group, was Enoch seen,
Known by his humble port, and heavenly mien :
On him the Priest's mysterious office lay,
For 'twas the eve of Man's transgression-day,
And him had Adam, with expiring breath,
Ordain'd to offer yearly, from his death,
A victim on that mountain, whence the skies
Had first inhaled the fumes of sacrifice.
In Adam's coat of skins array'd he stands,
Spreading to heaven his supplicating hands,
Ere from his robe the deadly steel he drew
To smite the victim, sporting in his view.
Behind him Seth, in majesty confess'd,
The World's great Elder, tower'd above the rest.
Serenely shone his sweet and solemn eye,
Like the sun reigning in the western sky;
Though nine slow centuries by stealth had shed
Grey hairs, the crown of glory, on his head,
In hardy health he rear'd his front sublime,
Like the green aloe, in perennial prime,

When full of years it shoots forth all its bloom,
And glads the forest through the inmost gloom;
So, in the blossom of a good old age,
Flourish'd amidst his sons that peerless sage.

Around him, in august succession, stood
The fathers of the world before the Flood:
— Enos; who taught mankind, on solemn days,
In sacred groves, to meet for prayer and praise,
And warn'd idolaters to lift their eye,
From sun and stars, to Him who made the sky:
— Canaan and Malaliel; of whom alone
Their age, of all that once they were, is known:
— Jared; who, full of hope beyond the tomb,
Hallow'd his offspring from the Mother's womb, *
And heaven received *the Son* that Parent gave,
He walk'd with God, and overstepp'd the grave;

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* The name of *Enoch*, the son of Jared, is derived from *chanac*, to *dedicate*.

— A mighty pilgrim in the vale of tears,
Born to the troubles of a thousand years,
Methuselah, whose feet unhalting ran
To the last circle of the life of man:
— Lamech; from infancy inured to toil,
To wring slow blessings from the accursed soil,
Ere yet to dress his vineyards, reap his corn,
And comfort him in care, was Noah born, *
Who, in a later age, by signal grace,
Survived to renovate the human race;
Both worlds, by sad reversion, were his due,
The Orphan of the old, the Father of the new.

These, with their families, on either hand,
Aliens and exiles in their native land,
The few who loved their Maker from their youth,
And worship'd God in spirit and in truth;

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* And he called his name Noah, saying, This same shall comfort us concerning our work, and toil of our hands, because of the ground which the Lord hath cursed. — GEN. V. v. 29.

These stood with Enoch: — All had fix'd their eyes
On him, and on the Lamb of sacrifice,
For now with trembling hand he shed the blood,
And placed the slaughter'd victim on the wood;
Then kneeling, as the sun went down, he laid
His hand upon the hallow'd pyre and pray'd: —
"Maker of heaven and earth! supreme o'er all
That live, and move, and breathe, on Thee we call:
Our father sinn'd and suffer'd; — we, who bear
Our father's image, his transgression share;
Humbled for his offences, and our own,
Thou, who art holy, wise, and just alone,
Accept, with free confession of our guilt,
This victim slain, this blood devoutly spilt,
While through the veil of sacrifice we see
Thy mercy smiling, and look up to Thee;
O grant forgiveness; power and grace are thine;
God of salvation! cause thy face to shine;
Hear us in heaven! fulfil our souls' desire,
God of our father! answer now with fire."

He rose; no light from heaven around him shone,
No fire descended from the eternal throne;
Cold on the pile the offer'd victim lay,
Amidst the stillness of expiring day;
The eyes of all that watch'd in vain to view
The wonted sign, distractedly withdrew;
Fear clip'd their breath, their doubling pulses raised,
And each by stealth upon his neighbour gazed;
From heart to heart a strange contagion ran,
A shuddering instinct crowded man to man;
Even Seth with secret consternation shook,
And cast on Enoch an imploring look.
Enoch, in whose sublime, unearthly mien,
No change of hue, no cloud of care was seen,
Full on the mute assembly turn'd his face,
Clear as the sun prepared to run his race;
He spoke; his words, with awful warning fraught,
Rallied and fix'd the scatter'd powers of thought.

" Men, brethren, fathers! wherefore do ye fear?
Hath God departed from us? — God is here;
Present in every heart, with sovereign power,
He tries, he proves his people in this hour;
Naked as light to his all-searching eye,
The thoughts that wrong, the doubts that tempt Him lie;
Yet slow to anger, merciful as just,
He knows our frame, remembers we are dust,
And spares our weakness: — In his truth believe,
Hope against hope, and ask till ye receive.
What, though no flame on Adam's altar burn,
No signal of acceptance yet return,
God is not man, who to our father sware,
All times, in every place, to answer prayer;
He cannot change; though heaven and earth decay,
The word of God shall never pass away.

" But mark the season: — from the rising sun,
Westward, the race of Cain the world o'errun;

Their monarch, mightiest of the sons of men,
Hath sworn destruction to the Patriarch's glen;
Hither he hastens; carnage strews his path:
— Who will await the giant in his wrath?
Or who will take the wings of silent night,
And seek deliverance from his sword by flight?
Thus saith the Lord: — Ye weak of faith and heart!
Who dare not trust the living God, depart;
The Angel of his presence leads your way,
Your lives are safe, and given you as a prey:
But ye, who, unappall'd at earthly harm,
Lean on the strength of his Almighty arm,
Prepared for life or death, with firm accord,
— Stand still, and see the glory of the Lord."

A pause, a dreary pause ensued: — then cried
The holy man, — " On either hand divide;
The feeble fly; with me the valiant stay;
Choose now your portion; whom will ye obey,

God or your fears? His counsel, or your own?"
— "The LORD; the LORD; for HE is GOD ALONE!"
Exclaim'd at once, with consentaneous choice,
The whole assembly, heart, and soul, and voice.
Then light from heaven with sudden beauty came,
Pure on the altar blazed the unkindled flame,
And upwards to their glorious source return'd
The sacred fires in which the victim burn'd:
While through the evening gloom, to distant eyes,
Morn o'er the Patriarchs' mountains seem'd to rise.

Awe-struck the congregation kneel'd around,
And worship with their faces to the ground;
The peace of God, beyond expression sweet,
Fill'd every spirit humbled at his feet,
And love, joy, wonder, deeply mingling there,
Drew from the heart unutterable prayer.

They rose; — as if his soul had pass'd away,
Prostrate before the altar Enoch lay,

Entranced so deeply, all believed him dead:
At length he breathed, he moved, he raised his head;
To heaven in ecstasy he turn'd his eyes;
— With such a look the dead in Christ shall rise,
When the last trumpet calls them from the dust,
To join the resurrection of the just: —
Yea, and from earthly grossness so refined,
(As if the soul had left the flesh behind,
Yet wore a mortal semblance,) upright stood
The great Evangelist before the Flood;
On him the vision of the Almighty broke,
And future times were present while he spoke. *

"The Saints shall suffer; righteousness shall fail;
O'er all the world iniquity prevail;
Giants, in fierce contempt of man and God,
Shall rule the nations with an iron rod;

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* Numbers, XXIV. v. 4.

On every mountain idol groves shall rise,
And darken Heaven with human sacrifice;
But God the Avenger comes, — a judgment-day,
A flood, shall sweep his enemies away.
How few, whose eyes shall then have seen the sun,
— One righteous family, and only one, —
Saved from that wreck of Nature, shall behold
The new Creation rising from the old!

"O, that the world of wickedness, destroy'd,
Might lie for ever without form and void!
Or, that the earth, to innocence restored,
Might flourish as the garden of the Lord!
It will not be: — among the sons of men,
The Giant-Spirit shall go forth again,
From clime to clime shall kindle murderous rage,
And spread the plagues of sin from age to age;
Yet shall the God of mercy, from above,
Extend the golden sceptre of his love,

And win the rebels to his righteous sway,
Till every mouth confess, and heart obey.

" Amidst the visions of ascending years,
What mighty Chief, what Conqueror appears ; *
His garments roll'd in blood, his eyes of flame,
And on his thigh the unutterable name ? †
— ' Tis I, that bring deliverance : strong to save,
I pluck'd the prey from death, and spoil'd the grave.'
— Wherefore, O Warrior ! are thy garments red,
Like those whose feet amidst the vintage tread ?
— ' I trod the wine-press of the field alone ;
I look'd around for succour ; there was none ;
Therefore my wrath sustain'd me while I fought,
And mine own arm my Saints' salvation wrought.'
— Thus may thine arm for evermore prevail ;
Thus may thy foes, O Lord ! for ever fail ;

* Isa. LXIII. v. 1—6. † Rev. XIX. v. 12.

Captive by thee captivity be led;
Seed of the woman! bruise the serpent's head;
Redeemer! promised since the world began,
Bow the high heavens, and condescend to man.

"Hail to the Day-spring; dawning from afar,
Bright in the east I see his natal star:
Prisoners of hope! lift up your joyful eyes;
Welcome the King of Glory from the skies:
Who is the King of Glory? — Mark his birth:
In deep humility he stoops to earth,
Assumes a Servant's form, a Pilgrim's lot,
Comes to his own, his own receive him not,
Though angel-choirs his peaceful advent greet,
And Gentile sages worship at his feet.

"Fair as that sovereign Plant, whose scions shoot,
With healing verdure, and immortal fruit,
The Tree of Life, beside the stream that laves
The fields of Paradise with gladdening waves;

Behold him rise from infancy to youth,
The Father's image, full of grace and truth;
Tried, tempted, proved in secret, till the hour,
When, girt with meekness, but array'd with power,
Forth in the spirit of the Lord, at length,
Like the sun shining in meridian strength,
He goes: — to preach good tidings to the poor;
To heal the wounds that nature cannot cure;
To bind the broken-hearted; to controul
Disease and death; to raise the sinking soul:
Unbar the dungeon, set the captive free,
Proclaim the joyous year of liberty,
And from the depth of undiscover'd night,
Bring life and immortality to light.

" How beauteous on the mountains are thy feet,
Thy form how comely, and thy voice how sweet,
Son of the Highest! — Who can tell thy fame?
The Deaf shall hear it while the Dumb proclaim;

Now bid the Blind behold their Saviour's light,
The Lame go forth rejoicing in their might;
Cleanse with a touch yon kneeling Leper's skin;
Cheer this pale Penitent, forgive her sin;
O, for that Mother's faith, her Daughter spare;
Restore the Maniac to a Father's prayer;
Pity the tears those mournful Sisters shed,
And Be the Resurrection of the Dead!

"What scene is this?—Amidst involving gloom,
The moonlight lingers on a lonely tomb;
No noise disturbs the garden's hallow'd bound,
But the watch walking on their midnight round:
Ah! who lies here, with marr'd and bloodless mien,
In whom no form or comeliness is seen;
His livid limbs with nails and scourges torn,
His side transpierced, his temples wreathed with thorn?

'Tis He, the Man of Sorrows! He who bore
Our sins and chastisement: — His toils are o'er;
On earth erewhile a suffering life he led,
Here hath he found a place to lay his head;
Rank'd with transgressors he resign'd his breath,
But with the rich he made his bed in death.
Sweet is the grave, where Angels watch and weep;
Sweet is the grave, and sanctified his sleep;
Rest, O my spirit! by this martyr'd form,
This wreck, that sunk beneath the Almighty storm,
When floods of wrath that weigh'd the world to hell,
On him alone, in righteous vengeance fell;
While men derided, demons urged his woes,
And God forsook him, — till the awful close;
Then, in triumphant agony, he cried,
— 'Tis finish'd!' — bow'd his sacred head, and died.
Death, as he struck that noblest victim, found
His sting was lost for ever in the wound;

The Grave, that holds his corse, her richest prize,
Shall yield him back, victorious, to the skies.
He lives: ye bars of steel! ye gates of brass!
Give way and let the King of Glory pass;
He lives;—ye golden portals of the spheres!
Open, the Sun of Righteousness appears.
But, ah! my spirit faints beneath the blaze,
That breaks, and brightens o'er the latter days,
When every tongue his trophies shall proclaim,
And every knee shall worship at his name;
For He shall reign with undivided power,
To Earth's last bounds, to Nature's final hour.

"'Tis done:—again the conquering Chief appears
In the dread vision of dissolving years;
His vesture dipp'd in blood, his eyes of flame,
The WORD OF GOD his everlasting name;*

* REV. XIX. v. 13.

Throned in mid-heaven, with clouds of glory spread,
He sits in judgment on the quick and dead;
Strong to deliver; Saints! your songs prepare;
Rush from your tombs to meet him in the air:
But terrible in vengeance; Sinners! bow *
Your haughty heads, the grave protects not now:
He who alone in mortal conflict trod
The mighty wine-press of the wrath of God,
Shall fill the cup of trembling to his foes,
The unmingled cup of inexhausted woes;
The proud shall drink it in that dreadful day,
While Earth dissolves, and Heaven is roll'd away."

Here ceased the Prophet:—From the altar broke
The last dim wreaths of fire-illumined smoke;

* Jude, v. 14—16.

Darkness had fall'n around; but o'er the streams
The Moon, new-ris'n, diffused her brightening beams;
Homeward, with tears, the worshippers return'd,
Yet while they wept their hearts within them burn'd.

END OF THE FIFTH CANTO.

THE

WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD.

CANTO SIXTH.

Javan's second Interview with Zillah. He visits the various Dwellings scattered throughout the Glen, and in the Evening sings to his Harp, amidst the assembled Inhabitants: — Address to Twilight; Jubal's Song of the Creation: the Power of Music exemplified.

Spent with the toils of that eventful day,
All night in dreamless slumber Javan lay;
But early springing from his bed of leaves,
Waked by the songs of swallows on the eaves,
From Enoch's cottage, in the cool grey hour,
He wander'd forth to Zillah's woodland bower;

There, in his former covert, on the ground,
The frame of his forsaken harp he found:
He smote the boss; the convex orb unstrung,
Instant with sweet reverberation rung:
The minstrel smiled, at that sonorous stroke,
To find the spell of harmony unbroke;
Trickling with dew, he bore it to the cell;
There, as with leaves he dried the sculptured shell,
He thought of Zillah, and resolved too late
To plead his constancy, and know his fate.

She from the hour, when, in a pilgrim's guise,
Javan return'd, — a stranger to her eyes,
Not to her heart, — from anguish knew no rest,
Love, pride, resentment, struggling in her breast.
All day she strove to hide her misery,
In vain: — a mother's eye is quick to see,
Slow to rebuke a daughter's bashful fears,
And Zillah's mother only chid with tears:

Night came, but Javan came not with the night;
Light vanish'd, Hope departed with the light;
Her lonely couch conceal'd her sleepless woes,
But with the morning star the maiden rose.
The soft refreshing breeze, the orient beams,
The dew, the mist unrolling from the streams,
The light, the joy, the music of the hour,
Stole on her spirit with resistless power,
With healing sweetness sooth'd her fever'd brain,
And woke the pulse of tenderness again.
Thus while she wander'd, with unconscious feet,
Absent in thought she reach'd her sylvan seat:
The youth descried her not amidst the wood,
Till, like a vision, at his side she stood.
Their eyes encounter'd; both at once exclaim'd,
"Javan!" and "Zillah!" — each the other named;
Those sounds were life or death to either heart;
He rose; she turn'd in terror to depart;
He caught her hand: — "O do not, do not flee!"
— It was a moment of eternity,

And now or never must he plight his vow,
Win or abandon her for ever now.

" Stay: — hear me, Zillah! — every power above,
Heaven, earth, thyself, bear witness to my love!
Thee have I loved from earliest infancy,
Loved with supreme affection only thee.
Long in these shades my timid passion grew,
Through every change, in every trial true;
I loved thee through the world in dumb despair,
Loved *thee*, that I might love no other fair;
Guilty, yet faithful still, to thee I fly,
Receive me, love me, Zillah! or I die."

Thus Javan's lips, so long in silence seal'd,
With sudden vehemence his soul reveal'd;
Zillah meanwhile recover'd power to speak,
While deadly paleness overcast her cheek:
— " Say not, ' I love thee! ' — Witness every tree
Around this bower, thy cruel scorn of me!

Could Javan love me through the world, yet leave
Her whom he loved, for hopeless years, to grieve?
Returning, could he find her here alone,
Yet pass her by, unknowing, as unknown?
All day was she forsaken, or forgot?
Did Javan seek her at her father's cot?
That cot of old so much his soul's delight,
His mother's seem'd not fairer in his sight:
No: Javan mocks me; none could love so well,
So long, so painfully, — and never tell."

"Love owns no law," rejoin'd the pleading youth,
"Except obedience to eternal truth:
Deep streams are silent; from the generous breast,
The dearest feelings are the last confest:
Erewhile I strove in vain to break my peace,
Now I could talk of love and never cease:
— Still had my trembling passion been conceal'd;
Still but in parables by stealth reveal'd,

Had not thine instantaneous presence wrung,
By swift surprise, the secret from my tongue.
Yet hath Affection language of her own,
And mine in every thing but words was shown;
In childhood, as the bird of nature free,
My song was gladness, when I sung to thee:
In youth, whene'er I mourn'd a bosom flame,
And praised a maiden whom I durst not name,
Couldst thou not then my hidden thought divine?
Didst thou not feel that I was wholly thine?
When for vain glory I forsook thee here,
Dear as thou wert, unutterably dear,
From virtue, truth, and innocence estranged,
To thee, thee only, was my heart unchanged;
And as I loved without a hope before,
Without a hope I loved thee yet the more.
At length, when, weary of the ways of men,
Refuge I sought in this maternal glen,
Thy sweet remembrance drew me from afar,
And Zillah's beauty was my leading star.

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Here when I found thee, fear itself grew bold,
Methought my tale of love already told;
But soon thine eyes the dream of folly broke,
And I from bliss, as they from slumber, woke;
My heart, my tongue, were chill'd to instant stone,
I durst not speak thy name, nor give my own.
When thou wert vanish'd, horror and affright
Seized me, my sins uprose before my sight;
Like fiends they rush'd upon me; but Despair
Wrung from expiring Faith a broken prayer;
Strength came; the path to Enoch's bower I trod;
He saw me, met me, led me back to God.
O Zillah! while I sought my Maker's grace,
And flesh and spirit fail'd before His face,
Thy tempting image from my breast I drove,
It was no season then for earthly love."

"For earthly love it is no season now,"
Exclaim'd the maiden with reproachful brow,

And eyes through tears of tenderness that shone,
And voice, half peace, half anger, in its tone:
" Freely thy past unkindness I forgive;
Content to perish here, so Javan live;
The tyrant's menace to our tribe we know;
The Patriarchs never seek, nor shun a foe;
Thou, while thou mayst, from swift destruction fly;
I and my father's house resolve to die."

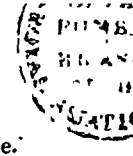
" With thee and with thy father's house, to bear
Death or captivity, is Javan's prayer;
Remorse for ever be the recreant's lot;
If I forsake thee now, I love thee not."

Thus while he vow'd, a gentle answer sprung
To Zillah's lips, but died upon her tongue;
Trembling she turn'd, and hasten'd to the rock,
Beyond those woods, that hid her folded flock,
Whose bleatings reach'd her ear, with loud complaint
Of her delay; she loosed them from restraint;

Then bounding headlong forth, with antic glee,
They roam'd in all the joy of liberty.
Javan beside her walk'd as in a dream,
Nor more of love renew'd the fruitless theme.

Forthwith from home, to home, throughout the glen,
The friends whom once he knew he sought again;
Each hailed the stranger welcome at his board,
As lost but found, as dead to life restored.
From Eden's camp no tidings came; the day
In awful expectation pass'd away.
At eve his harp the fond enthusiast strung,
On Adam's mount, and to the Patriarchs sung;
While youth and age, an eager throng, admire
The mingling music of the voice and lyre.

"I love thee, Twilight! as thy shadows roll,
The calm of evening steals upon my soul,



Sublimely tender, solemnly serene,
Still as the hour, enchanting as the scene.
I love thee, Twilight! for thy gleams impart
Their dear, their dying influence to my heart,
When o'er the harp of thought thy passing wind
Awakens all the music of the mind,
And Joy and Sorrow, as the spirit burns,
And Hope and Memory sweep the chords by turns,
While Contemplation, on seraphic wings,
Mounts with the flame of sacrifice, and sings.
Twilight! I love thee; let thy glooms increase
Till every feeling, every pulse is peace:
Slow from the sky the light of day declines,
Clearer within the dawn of glory shines,
Revealing, in the hour of Nature's rest,
A world of wonders in the poet's breast:
Deeper, O Twilight! then thy shadows roll,
An awful vision opens on my soul.

"On such an evening, so divinely calm,
The woods all melody, the breezes balm,
Down in a vale, where lucid waters stray'd,
And mountain-cedars stretch'd their downward shade,
Jubal, the Prince of Song (in youth unknown),
Retired to commune with his harp alone;
For still he nursed it, like a secret thought,
Long cherish'd and to late perfection wrought; —
And still with cunning hand, and curious ear,
Enrich'd, ennobled, and enlarged its sphere,
Till he had compass'd, in that magic round,
A soul of harmony, a heaven of sound.
Then sang the minstrel, in his laurel bower,
Of Nature's origin, and Music's power.
— 'He spake, and it was done; — Eternal Night,
At God's command, awaken'd into light;
He called the elements, Earth, Ocean, Air,
He call'd them when they were not, and they were:
He look'd through space, and kindling o'er the sky,
Sun, moon, and stars, came forth to meet his eye:

His spirit moved upon the desert earth,
And sudden life through all things swarm'd to birth;
Man from the dust he raised to rule the whole;
He breathed, and man became a living soul:
Through Eden's groves the Lord of Nature trod,
Upright and pure, the image of his God.
Thus were the heavens and all their host display'd,
In wisdom thus were earth's foundations laid;
The glorious scene a holy sabbath closed;
Amidst his works the Omnipotent reposed;
And while he view'd, and bless'd them from his seat,
All worlds, all beings worshipp'd at his feet:
The morning stars in choral concert sang,
The rolling deep with hallelujahs rang,
Adoring angels from their orbs rejoice,
The voice of music was Creation's voice.

"'Alone along the lyre of Nature sigh'd
The master-chord, to which no chord replied:

For Man, while bliss and beauty reign'd around,
For Man alone, no fellowship was found,
No fond companion, in whose dearer breast
His heart, repining in his own, might rest;
For, born to love, the heart delights to roam,
A kindred bosom is its happiest home.
On earth's green lap, the Father of mankind,
In mild dejection, thoughtfully reclined;
Soft o'er his eyes a sealing slumber crept,
And Fancy soothed him while Reflection slept.
Then God—who thus would make his counsel known,
Counsel that will'd not man to dwell alone,
Created Woman with a smile of grace,
And left the smile that made her on her face.
The Patriarch's eyelids open'd on his bride,
— The morn of beauty risen from his side!
He gazed with new-born rapture on her charms,
And Love's first whispers won her to his arms.
Then, tuned through all the chords supremely sweet,
Exulting Nature found her lyre complete,

And from the key of each harmonious sphere,
Struck music worthy of her Maker's ear.'

" Here Jubal paused; for grim before him lay,
Couch'd like a lion watching for his prey,
With blood-red eye of fascinating fire,
Fix'd, like the gazing serpent's, on the lyre,
An awful form, that through the gloom appear'd,
Half brute, half human; whose terrific beard,
And hoary flakes of long dishevell'd hair,
Like eagle's plumage, ruffled by the air,
Veil'd a sad wreck of grandeur and of grace,
Limbs worn and wounded, a majestic face,
Deep-ploughed by Time, and ghastly pale with woes,
That goaded till remorse to madness rose;
Haunted by phantoms, he had fled his home,
With savage beasts in solitude to roam;
Wild as the waves, and wandering as the wind,
No art could tame him, and no chains could bind:

Already seven disastrous years had shed
Mildew and blast on his unsheltered head;
His brain was smitten by the sun at noon,
His heart was wither'd by the cold night-moon.

" 'Twas Cain, the sire of nations: — Jubal knew
His kindred looks, and tremblingly withdrew;
He, darting like the blaze of sudden fire,
Leap'd o'er the space between, and grasp'd the lyre:
Sooner with life the struggling bard would part,
And ere the fiend could tear it from his heart,
He hurl'd his hand with one tremendous stroke,
O'er all the strings; whence in a whirlwind broke
Such tones of terror, dissonance, despair,
As till that hour had never jarr'd in air.
Astonish'd into marble at the shock,
Backward stood Cain, unconscious as a rock,
Cold, breathless, motionless through all his frame;
But soon his visage quicken'd into flame,

When Jubal's hand the crashing jargon changed
To melting harmony, and nimbly ranged .
From chord to chord, ascending sweet and clear,
Then rolling down in thunder on the ear ;
With power the pulse of anguish to restrain,
And charm the evil spirit from the brain.

" Slowly recovering from that trance profound,
Bewilder'd, touch'd, transported with the sound,
Cain view'd himself, the bard, the earth, the sky,
While wonder flash'd and faded in his eye,
And reason, by alternate frenzy crost,
Now seem'd restored, and now for ever lost.
So shines the moon, by glimpses, through her shrouds,
When windy Darkness rides upon the clouds,
Till through the blue, serene, and silent night,
She reigns in full tranquillity of light.
Jubal, with eager hope, beheld the chase
Of strange emotions hurrying o'er his face,

And waked his noblest numbers to controul
The tide and tempest of the maniac's soul:
Through many a maze of melody they flew,
They rose like incense, they distill'd like dew,
Pour'd through the sufferer's breast delicious balm,
And soothed remembrance till remorse grew calm,
Till Cain forsook the solitary wild,
Led by the minstrel like a weaned child.
O! had you seen him to his home restored,
How young and old ran forth to meet their lord;
How friends and kindred on his neck did fall,
Weeping aloud, while Cain outwept them all:
But hush! — thenceforward when recoiling care
Lower'd on his brow, and sadden'd to despair,
The lyre of Jubal, with divinest art,
Repell'd the demon, and revived his heart.
Thus Song, the breath of heaven, had power to bind
In chains of harmony the mightiest mind;
Thus Music's empire in the soul began,
The first-born Poet ruled the first-born Man."

While Javan sung, the shadows fell around,
The moving glow-worm brighten'd on the ground,
He ceased: the mute assembly rose in tears;
Delight and wonder were chastised with fears;
That heavenly harmony, unheard before,
Awoke the feeling, — "Who shall hear it more?
The sun had set in glory on their sight,
For them in vain might morn restore the light;
Though self-devoted, through each mortal frame,
At thought of Death, a cold sick shuddering came,
Nature's infirmity; — but faith was given,
The flame that lifts the sacrifice to heaven:
Through doubt and darkness then beyond the skies,
Eternal prospects open'd on their eyes;
Already seem'd the immortal spirit free,
And Death was swallow'd up in victory.

END OF THE SIXTH CANTO.

THE

WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD.

CANTO SEVENTH.

The Patriarchs and their Families carried away captive by a Detachment from the Army of the Invaders. The Tomb of Abel: his Murder by Cain described. The Origin of the Giants: the Infancy and early Adventures of their King: the Leader of their Host encamped in Eden.

THE flocks and herds throughout the glen reposed;
No human eyelid there in slumber closed;
None, save the infant's on the mother's breast;—
With arms of love caressing and carest,
She, while her elder offspring round her clung,
Each eye intent on hers, and mute each tongue,
The voice of Death in every murmur heard,
And felt his touch in every limb that stirr'd.

At midnight, down the forest hills, a train
Of eager warriors from the host of Cain,
Burst on the stillness of the scene : — they spread
In bands, to clutch the victims ere they fled ;
Of flight unmindful, at their summons, rose
Those victims, meekly yielding to their foes ;
Though woman wept to leave her home behind,
The weak were comforted, the strong resign'd,
And ere the moon descending o'er the vale,
Grew, at the bright approach of morning, pale,
Collected thus, the patriarchal clan,
With strengthen'd confidence, their march began,
Since not in ashes were their dwellings laid,
And death, though threaten'd still, was still delay'd.
Struck with their fearless innocence, they saw
Their fierce assailants check'd with sacred awe ;
The foe became a phalanx of defence,
And brought them, like a guard of Angels, thence.
A vista-path, that through the forest led,
(By Javan shunn'd when from the camp he fled,)

The pilgrims track'd till on the mountain's height
They met the sun new ris'n, in glorious light;
Empurpled mists along the landscape roll'd,
And all the orient flamed with clouds of gold.

Here, while they halted, on their knees they raise
To God the sacrifice of prayer and praise:
— "Glory to Thee, for every blessing shed,
In days of peace on our protected head;
Glory to Thee, for fortitude to bear
The wrath of man, rejoicing o'er despair;
Glory to Thee, whatever ill befall,
For faith on thy victorious name to call;
Thine own eternal purposes fulfil;
We come, O God! to suffer all thy will."

Refresh'd and rested on their course they went,
Ere the clouds melted from the firmament;
Odours abroad the winds of morning breathe,
And fresh with dew the herbage sprang beneath;

Down from the hills, that gently sloped away
To the broad river shining into day,
They pass'd, along the brink the path they kept,
Where high aloof o'er-arching willows wept,
Whose silvery foliage glisten'd in the beam,
And floating shadows fringed the chequer'd stream.

Adjacent rose a myrtle-planted mound,
Whose spiry top, a granite fragment crown'd;
Tinctured with many-colour'd moss, the stone,
Rich as a cloud of summer-evening, shone;
Amidst encircling verdure, that array'd
The beauteous hillock with a cope of shade.

"Javan!" said Enoch, "on this spot began
The fatal curse;—man perish'd here by man;
The earliest death a son of Adam died
Was murder, and that murder fratricide!
Here Abel fell a corse along this shore;
Here Cain's recoiling footsteps reek'd with gore:

Horror upraised his locks, unloosed his knees;
He heard a voice; he hid among the trees:
— 'Where is thy brother?' — From the whirlwind
came
The voice of God, amidst enfolding flame:
— 'Am I my brother's keeper?' — hoarse and low,
Cain mutter'd from the copse, — 'that I should
know?'
— 'What hast thou done? — For vengeance to the
skies,
Lo! from the dust the blood of Abel cries:
Curst from the earth that drank his blood, with toil
Thine hand shall plough in vain her barren soil;
An exile and a wanderer thou shalt be;
A brother's eye shall never look on thee.' —

"The shuddering culprit answer'd in despair,
— 'Greater the punishment than flesh can bear.'
— 'Yet shalt thou bear it; on thy brow reveal'd,
Thus be thy sentence and thy safeguard seal'd.'

Silently, swiftly as the lightning's blast,
A hand of fire athwart his temples passed:
He ran, as in the terror of a dream,
To quench his burning anguish in the stream;
But bending o'er the brink, the swelling wave
Back to the eye his branded visage gave;
As soon on murder'd Abel durst he look;
Yet power to fly his palsied limbs forsook;
There turn'd to stone for his presumptuous crime,
A monument of wrath to latest time,
Might Cain have stood; but Mercy raised his head
In prayer for help,—his strength return'd,—he fled.
That mound of myrtles, o'er their favourite child,
Eve planted, and the hand of Adam piled;
Yon mossy stone, above his ashes raised,
His altar once, with Abel's offering blazed,
When God well pleased beheld the flames arise,
And smiled acceptance on the sacrifice."

Enoch to Javan, walking at his side,
Thus held discourse apart: the youth replied:
" Relieved from toil, though Cain is gone to rest,
And the turf flowers on his disburthen'd breast,
Amongst his race the murdering spirit reigns,
But riots fiercest in the giants' veins.
— Sprung from false leagues, when monstrous love combined
The sons of God and daughters of mankind,
Self-styled the progeny of heaven and earth,
Eden first gave the world's oppr[illegible]rth;
Thence far away, beneath the rising moon,
Or where the shadow vanishes at noon,
The adulterous mothers from the sires withdrew:
— Nurst in luxuriant climes their offspring grew;
Till, as in stature o'er mankind they tower'd,
And giant-strength all mortal strength o'erpower'd,
To heaven the proud blasphemers raised their eyes,
And scorn'd the tardy vengeance of the skies:

On earth invincible, they sternly broke
Love's willing bonds, and Nature's kindred yoke,
Mad for dominion, with remorseless sway,
Compell'd their reptile-brethren to obey,
And doom'd their human herds, with thankless toil,
Like brutes, to grow and perish on the soil,
Their sole inheritance, through lingering years,
The bread of misery and the cup of tears,
The tasks of oxen, with the hire of slaves,
Dishonour'd lives, and desecrated graves.

"When war, that self-inflicted scourge of man,
His boldest crime and bitterest curse, — began;
As lions fierce, as forest-cedars tall,
And terrible as torrents, in their fall,
Headlong from rocks, through vales and vineyards hurl'd,
These men of prey laid waste the eastern world.

They taught their tributary hordes to wield
The sword, red-flaming, through the death-strown field,
With strenuous arm the uprooted rock to throw,
Glance the light arrow from the bounding bow,
Whirl the broad shield to meet the darted stroke,
And stand to combat, like the unyielding oak.
Then eye from eye with fell suspicion turn'd,
In kindred breasts unnatural hatred burn'd!
Brother met brother in the lists of strife,
The son lay lurking for the father's life;
With rabid instinct, men who never knew
Each other's face before, each other slew;
All tribes, all nations learn'd the fatal art,
And every hand was arm'd to pierce a heart.
Nor man alone the giants' might subdued;
— The camel, wean'd from quiet solitude,
Grazed round their camps, or slow along the road,
Midst marching legions, bore the servile load.

With flying forelock and dishevell'd mane,
They caught the wild steed prancing o'er the plain,
For war or pastime rein'd his fiery force;
Fleet as the wind he stretch'd along the course,
Or loudly neighing at the trumpet's sound,
With hoofs of thunder smote the indented ground.
The enormous elephant obey'd their will,
And, tamed to cruelty with direst skill,
Roar'd for the battle, when he felt the goad,
And his proud lord his sinewy neck bestrode,
Through crashing ranks resistless havoc bore,
And writhed his trunk, and bathed his tusks in gore.

" Thus while the giants trampled friends and foes,
Amongst their tribe, a mighty chieftain rose;
His birth mysterious, but traditions tell
What strange events his infancy befell.

" A goatherd fed his flock on many a steep,
Where Eden's rivers swell the southern deep;

A melancholy man, who dwelt alone,
Yet far abroad his evil fame was known,
The first of woman born, that might presume
To wake the dead bones mouldering in the tomb,
And, from the gulf of uncreated night,
Call phantoms of futurity to light.
'Twas said his voice could stay the falling flood,
Eclipse the sun, and turn the moon to blood,
Roll back the planets on their golden cars,
And from the firmament unfix the stars.
Spirits of fire and air, of sea and land,
Came at his call, and flew at his command;
His spells so potent, that his changing breath
Open'd or shut the gates of life and death.
O'er Nature's powers he claim'd supreme control,
And held communion with all Nature's soul:
The name and place of every herb he knew,
Its healing balsam, or pernicious dew:
The meanest reptile, and the noblest birth
Of ocean's caverns, or the living earth,

Obey'd his mandate : — lord of all the rest,
Man more than all his hidden art confess'd,
Cringed to his face, consulted, and revered
His oracles, — detested him and fear'd.

" Once by the river, in a waking dream,
He stood to watch the ever-running stream,
In which, reflected upward to his eyes,
He giddily look'd down upon the skies,
For thus he feign'd in his ecstatic mood,
To summon divination from the flood.
His steady view, a floating object cross'd ;
His eye pursued it till the sight was lost. —
An outcast infant in a fragile bark !
The river whirl'd the willow-woven ark
Down tow'rds the deep ; the tide returning bore
The little voyager unharm'd to shore :
Him in his cradle-ship securely bound
With swathing skins at eve the goatherd found.

Nurst by that foster-sire, austere and rude,
Midst rocks and glens, in savage solitude,
Among the kids, the rescued foundling grew,
Nutrition from whose shaggy dams he drew,
Till bâby-curls his broader temples crown'd,
And torrid suns his flexile limbs embrown'd:
Then as he sprang from green to florid age,
And rose to giant-stature, stage by stage,
He roam'd the vallies with his browsing flock,
And leapt in joy of youth from rock to rock;
Climb'd the sharp precipice's steepest breast,
To seize the eagle brooding on her nest,
And rent his way through matted woods, to tear
The skulking panther from his hidden lair.
A trodden serpent, horrible and vast,
Sprang on the heedless rover as he pass'd;
Limb lock'd o'er limb, with many a straitening fold
Of orbs inextricably involved, he roll'd
On earth in vengeance, broke the twisted toils,
Strangled the hissing fiend, and wore the spoils.

With hardy exercise, and cruel art,
To nerve the frame, and petrify the heart,
The wizard train'd his pupil, from a span,
To thrice the bulk and majesty of man.
His limbs were sinewy strength; commanding grace,
And dauntless spirit sparkled in his face;
His arm could pluck the lion from his prey,
And hold the horn'd rhinoceros at bay;
His feet o'er highest hills pursue the hind,
Or tire the ostrich buoyant on the wind.

" Yet 'twas the stripling's chief delight to brave
The river's wrath, and wrestle with the wave;
When torrent rains had swoln the furious tide,
Light on the foamy surge he loved to ride;
When calm and clear the stream was wont to flow,
Fearless he dived to search the caves below.
His childhood's story, often told, had wrought
Sublimest hopes in his aspiring thought.

— Once on a cedar, from its mountain-throne
Pluckt by the tempest, forth he sail'd alone,
And reach'd the gulf; — with eye of eager fire,
And flushing cheek, he watch'd the shores retire,
Till sky and water wide around were spread;
— Straight to the sun he thought his voyage led,
With shouts of transport hail'd its setting light,
And follow'd all the long and lonely night:
But ere the morning-star expired, he found
His stranded bark once more on earthly ground.
Tears, wrung from secret shame, suffused his eyes,
When in the east he saw the sun arise;
Pride quickly check'd them — young ambition burn'd
For bolder enterprize, as he return'd.

" Through snares and deaths pursuing fame and power,
He scorn'd his flock from that adventurous hour,
And, leagued with monsters of congenial birth,
Began to scourge and subjugate the earth.

Meanwhile the sons of Cain, who till'd the soil,
By noble arts had learn'd to lighten toil;
Wisely their scatter'd knowledge he combined;
Yet had an hundred years matur'd his mind,
Ere with the strength that laid the forest low,
And skill that made the iron furnace glow,
His genius launch'd the keel, and sway'd the helm,
(His throne and sceptre on the wat'ry realm,)
While from the tent of his expanded sail,
He eyed the heavens and flew before the gale,
The first of men whose courage knew to guide
The bounding vessel through the refluent tide.
Then swore the giant, in his pride of soul,
To range the universe from pole to pole,
Rule the remotest nations with his nod,
To live a hero, and to die a god.

"This is the king that wars in Eden: — now,
Fulfill'd at length he deems his early vow;

His foot hath overrun the world, — his hand
Smitten to dust the pride of every land:
The Patriarchs last, beneath his impious rod,
He dooms to perish or abjure their God.
— O God of truth! rebuke the tyrant's rage,
And save the remnant of thine heritage."

When Javan ceased, they stood upon the height,
Where first he rested on his lonely flight,
Whence to the sacred mountain far away,
The land of Eden in perspective lay.
'Twas noon; — they tarried there, till milder hours
Woke with light airs the breath of evening flowers.

END OF THE SEVENTH CANTO.

THE

WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD.

CANTO EIGHTH.

The Scene changes to a Mountain, on the Summit of which, beneath the Shade of ancient Trees, the Giants are assembled round their King. A Minstrel sings the Monarch's Praises, and describes the Destruction of the Remnant of the Force of his Enemies, in an Assault, by Land and Water, on their Encampment, between the Forest on the eastern Plain of Eden and the River to the West. The Captive Patriarchs are presented before the King and his Chieftains.

"THERE is a living spirit in the Lyre,
A breath of music and a soul of fire;
It speaks a language, to the world unknown;
It speaks that language to the Bard alone;
While warbled symphonies entrance his ears,
That spirit's voice in every tone he hears;

'Tis his the mystic meaning to rehearse,
To utter oracles in glowing verse,
Heroic themes from age to age prolong,
And make the dead in nature live in song.
Though graven rocks the warrior's deeds proclaim,
And mountains, hewn to statues, wear his name;
Though, shrined in adamant, his relics lie
Beneath a pyramid, that scales the sky;
All that the hand hath fashion'd shall decay;
All that the eye admires shall pass away;
The mouldering rocks, the hero's hope shall fail,
Earthquakes shall heave the mountains to the vale,
The shrine of adamant betray its trust,
And the proud pyramid resolve to dust;
The Lyre alone immortal fame secures,
For Song alone through Nature's change endures;—
Transfused like life, from breast to breast it glows,
From sire to son by sure succession flows,
Speeds its unceasing flight from clime to clime,
Outstripping Death upon the wings of Time.

"Soul of the Lyre! whose magic power can raise
Inspiring visions of departed days;—
Or, with the glimpses of mysterious rhyme,
Dawn on the dreams of unawaken'd Time;
Soul of the Lyre! instruct thy bard to sing
The latest triumph of the Giant-king,
Who sees this day his orb of glory fill'd:
— In what creative numbers shall I build,
With what exalted strains of music crown,
His everlasting pillar of renown?
Though, like the rainbow, by a wondrous birth,
He sprang to light, the joy of heaven and earth;
Though, like the rainbow, — for he cannot die, —
His form shall pass unseen into the sky;
Say, shall the hero share the coward's lot,
Vanish from earth, ingloriously forgot?
No! the divinity that rules the Lyre,
And clothes these lips with eloquence of fire,
Commands the song to rise in quenchless flame,
And light the world for ever with his fame."

Thus on a mountain's venerable head,
Where trees, coeval with creation, spread
Their massy-twisted branches, green and grey,
Mature below, their tops in dry decay,
A bard of Jubal's lineage proudly sung,
Then stay'd awhile the raptures of his tongue:
A shout of horrible applause, that rent
The echoing hills and answering firmament,
Burst from the Giants, — where in barbarous state,
Flush'd with new wine, around their king they sate;
A chieftain each, who, on his brazen car,
Had led an host of meaner men to war;
And now from recent fight on Eden's plain,
Where fell their foes, in helpless conflict slain,
Victoriously return'd, beneath the trees
They rest from toil, carousing at their ease.

Adjacent, where the mountain's spacious breast
Open'd in airy grandeur to the west,

Huge piles of fragrant cedars, on the ground,
As altars blazed, while victims bled around,
To gods, whose worship vanish'd with the Flood,
— Divinities of brass, and stone, and wood,
By man himself in his own image made;
The fond creator to the creature pray'd!
And he, who from the forest or the rock
Hew'd the rough mass, adored the shapen block!
Then seem'd his flocks ignoble in his eyes,
His choicest herds too mean for sacrifice,
He pour'd his brethren's blood upon the pyre,
And pass'd his sons to demons through the fire.

Exalted o'er the vassal chiefs, behold
Their sovereign, cast in Nature's mightiest mould;
Beneath an oak, whose woven boughs display'd
A verdant canopy of light and shade,
Throned on a rock the Giant-king appears,
In the full manhood of five hundred years;

His robe, the spoils of lions, by his might
Dragg'd from their dens, or slain in chase or fight;
His raven locks, unblanch'd by withering Time,
Amply dishevell'd o'er his brow sublime;
His dark eyes, flush'd with restless radiance, gleam
Like broken moonlight rippling on the stream.
Grandeur of soul, which nothing might appal,
And nothing satisfy if less than all,
Had stamp'd upon his air, his form, his face,
The character of calm and awful grace;
But direst cruelty, by guile represt,
Lurk'd in the dark volcano of his breast,
In silence brooding, like the secret power
That springs the earthquake at the midnight hour.

From Eden's summit, with obdurate pride,
Red from afar, the battle-scene he eyed,
Where late he crush'd, with one remorseless blow,
The remnant of his last and noblest foe;

At hand he view'd the trophies of his toils,
Herds, flocks, and steeds, the world's collected spoils;
Below, his legions march'd in war array,
Unstain'd with blood in that unequal fray:
— An hundred tribes, whose sons their arms had borne,
Without contention, from the field at morn,
Their bands dividing, when the fight was won,
Darken'd the region tow'rds the slanting sun,
Like clouds, whose shadows o'er the landscape sail,
— While to their camp, that fill'd the northern vale,
A waving sea of tents, immensely spread,
The trumpet summon'd, and the banners led.
With these a train of captives, sad and slow,
Moved to a death of shame, or life of woe,
A death on altars hateful to the skies,
Or life in chains, a slower sacrifice.
Fair smiled the face of Nature; — all serene
And lovely, Evening tranquillized the scene;

The furies of the fight were gone to rest,
The cloudless sun grew broader down the west,
The hills beneath him melted from the sight,
Receding through the heaven of purple light;
Along the plain the maze of rivers roll'd,
And verdant shadows gleam'd in waves of gold.

Thus while the tyrant cast his haughty eye
O'er the broad landscape and incumbent sky,
His heart exulting whisper'd — "All is mine,"
And heard a voice from all things answer "Thine."
Such was the matchless chief, whose name of yore
Fill'd the wide world; — his name is known no more:
O that for ever from the rolls of fame,
Like his, had perish'd ev'ry conqueror's name!
Then had mankind been spared, in after-times,
Their greatest sufferings and their greatest crimes.
The hero scourges not his age alone,
His curse to late posterity is known:

He slays his thousands with his living breath,
His tens of thousands by his fame in death.
Achilles quench'd not all his wrath on Greece,
Through Homer's song its miseries never cease;
Like Phœbus' shafts, the bright contagion brings
Plagues on the people for the feuds of kings.
'Twas not in vain the son of Philip sigh'd
For worlds to conquer, — o'er the western tide,
His spirit, in the Spaniard's form, o'erthrew
Realms, that the Macedonian never knew.
The steel of Brutus struck not Cæsar dead;
Cæsar in other lands hath rear'd his head,
And fought, of friends and foes, on many a plain,
His millions, captured, fugitive, and slain;
Yet seldom suffer'd, where his country died,
A Roman vengeance for his parricide.

The sun was sunk; the sacrificial pyres
From smouldering ashes breathed their last blue fires,

The smiling star, that lights the world to rest,
Walk'd in the rosy gardens of the west,
Like Eve erewhile through Eden's blooming bowers,
A lovelier star amidst a heaven of flowers.
Now in the freshness of the falling shade,
Again the minstrel to the monarch play'd.
— "Where is the youth renown'd? — the youth whose voice
Was wont to make the listening camp rejoice,
When to his harp, in many a peerless strain,
He sang the wonders of the Giant's reign:
O where is Javan?" — Thus the bard renew'd
His lay, and with a rival's transport view'd
The cloud of sudden anger, that o'ercame
The tyrant's countenance, at Javan's name;
Javan, whose song was once his soul's delight,
Now doom'd a traitor recreant by his flight.
The envious minstrel smiled; then boldly ran
His prelude o'er the chords, and thus began: —

"'Twas on the morn that faithless Javan fled,
To yonder plain the king of nations led
His countless hosts, and stretch'd their wide array
Along the woods, within whose shelter lay
The sons of Eden *: — these, with secret pride,
In ambush thus the invincible defied:
— 'Girt with the forest wherefore should we fear?
The Giant's sword shall never reach us here:
Behind, the river rolls its deep defence;
The Giant's hand shall never pluck us hence.'
Vain boast of fools! who to that hand prepare
For their own lives the inevitable snare:
His legions smote the standards of the wood,
And with their prostrate strength controll'd the flood;
Lopt off their boughs, and jointed beam to beam,
The pines and oaks were launch'd upon the stream,

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* Vide Canto I. p. 5., and Canto III. p. 48.

An hundred rafts. — Yet still within a zone
Of tangled coppices, — a waste, o'ergrown
With briars and thorns, — the dauntless victims lie,
Scorn to surrender, and prepare to die.
The second sun went down; the monarch's plan
Was perfected: the dire assault began.

"Marshall'd by twilight, his obedient bands
Engirt the wood, with torches in their hands;
The signal given, they shoot them through the air;
The blazing brands in rapid vollies glare,
Descending through the gloom with spangled light,
As if the stars were falling through the night.
Along the wither'd grass the wild-fire flew,
Higher and hotter with obstruction grew;
The green wood hiss'd; from crackling thickets broke
Light glancing flame, and heavy rolling smoke;
Till all the breadth of forest seem'd to rise
In raging conflagration to the skies.

Fresh o'er our heads the winds propitious blow,
But roll the fierce combustion on the foe.
Awhile they paused, of every hope bereft,
Choice of destruction all their refuge left;
If from the flames they fled, behind them lay
The river roaring to receive his prey;
If through the stream they sought the farther strand,
Our rafts were moor'd to meet them ere they land;
With triple death environ'd thus they stood,
Till nearer peril drove them to the flood.
Safe on a hill, where sweetest moonlight slept,
As o'er the changing scene my watch I kept,
I heard their shrieks of agony; I hear
Those shrieks still ring in my tormented ear;
I saw them leap the gulf with headlong fright;
O that mine eyes could now forget that sight!
They sank in multitude; but, prompt to save,
Our warriors snatch'd the stragglers from the wave,
And on their rafts a noble harvest bore
Of rescued heroes, captive, to the shore.

"One little troop their lessening ground maintain'd,
Till space to perish in alone remain'd;
Then with a shout that rent the echoing air,
More like the shout of victory than despair,
Wedged in a solid phalanx, man by man,
Right through the scorching wilderness they ran,
Where half extinct the smouldering fuel glow'd,
And levell'd copses strew'd the open road.
Unharm'd as spirits while they seem'd to pass,
Their lighted features flared like molten brass;
Around the flames in writhing volumes spread,
Thwarted their path, or mingled o'er their head;
Beneath their feet the fires to ashes turn'd,
But in their wake with mounting fury burn'd.
Our host recoil'd from that amazing sight;
Scarcely the king himself restrain'd their flight;
He, with his chiefs, in brazen armour, stood
Unmoved, to meet the maniacs from the wood.

Dark as a thunder-cloud their phalanx came,
But split like lightning into forms of flame;
Soon as in purer air their heads they raised
To taste the breath of heaven, their garments blazed;
Then blind, distracted, weaponless, yet flush'd
With dreadful valour, on their foes they rush'd;
The Giants met them midway on the plain;
'Twas but a struggle of a moment; — slain,
They fell; their relics, to the flames return'd,
As offerings to the immortal gods were burn'd;
And never did the light of morning rise
Upon the clouds of such a sacrifice."

Abruptly here the minstrel ceased to sing,
And every face was turn'd upon the king;
He, while the stoutest hearts recoil'd with fear,
And Giants trembled their own deeds to hear,
Unmoved and unrelenting, in his mind
Deeds of more impious enterprize design'd:

A dire conception labour'd in his breast;
His eye was sternly pointed to the west,
Where stood the mount of Paradise sublime,
Whose guarded top, since man's presumptuous crime,
By noon, a dusky cloud appear'd to rise,
But blazed a beacon through nocturnal skies.
As Ætna, view'd from ocean far away,
Slumbers in blue revolving smoke by day,
Till darkness, with terrific splendour, shows
The eternal fires that crest the eternal snows; *
So where the cherubim in vision turn'd
Their flaming swords, the summit lower'd or burn'd.
And now conspicuous through the twilight gloom,
The glancing beams the distant hills illume,

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* Sorge nel sen de la Sicilia aprica
Monte superbo al cielo,
Che d'atro incendio incoronato hà il crine;
Sparso il tergo è di neve, e fatta amica
Lambe la fiamma il gielo,
E tra discreti ardor duran le brine. — F. Testi.

And, as the shadows deepen o'er the ground,
Scatter a red and wavering lustre round.

Awhile the monarch, fearlessly amazed,
With jealous anger on the glory gazed;
Already had his arm in battle hurl'd
His thunders round the subjugated world;
Lord of the nether universe, his pride
Was rein'd, while Paradise his power defied.
An upland isle, by meeting streams embraced,
It tower'd to heaven amidst a sandy waste;
Below, impenetrable woods display'd
Depths of mysterious solitude and shade;
Above, with adamantine bulwarks crown'd,
Primeval rocks in hoary masses frown'd;
O'er all were seen the cherubim of light,
Like pillar'd flames amidst the falling night;
So high it rose, so bright the mountain shone,
It seem'd the footstool of Jehovah's throne.

The Giant panted with intense desire
To scale those heights, and storm the walls of fire:
His ardent soul in ecstasy of thought,
Even now with Michael and his angels fought,
And saw the seraphim, like meteors, driven
Before his banners through the gates of heaven,
While he secure the glorious garden trod,
And sway'd his sceptre from the mount of God.

When suddenly the bard had ceased to sing,
While all the chieftains gazed upon their king,
Whose changing looks a rising storm bespoke,
Ere from his lips the dread explosion broke,
The trumpets sounded, and before his face
Were led the captives of the Patriarchs' race,
— A lovely and a venerable band
Of young and old, amidst their foes they stand;
Unawed they see the fiery trial near;
They fear'd their God, and knew no other fear. *

* Je crains Dieu, cher Abner, et n'ai point d'autre crainte.
RACINE.

To light the dusky scene, resplendent fires,
Of pine and cedar, blazed in lofty pyres;
While from the east the moon with doubtful gleams
Now tipt the hills, now glanced athwart the streams,
Till, darting through the clouds her beauteous eye,
She open'd all the temple of the sky;
The Giants, closing in a narrower ring,
By turns surveyed the prisoners and the king.
Javan stood forth;— to all the youth was known,
And every eye was fixed on him alone.

END OF THE EIGHTH CANTO.

THE

WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD.

CANTO NINTH.

The King's Determination to sacrifice the Patriarchs and their Families to his Demon-Gods. His Sentence on Javan. Zillah's Distress. The Sorcerer pretends to declare the Secret of the Birth of the King, and proposes his Deification. Enoch appears.

A GLEAM of joy, at that expected sight,
Shot o'er the monarch's brow with baleful light:
" Behold," thought he, " the great decisive hour;
Ere morn, these sons of God shall prove my power:
Offer'd by me their blood shall be the price
Of demon-aid to conquer Paradise."

Thus while he threaten'd, Javan caught his view,
And instantly his visage changed its hue;
Inflamed with rage past utterance, he frown'd,
He gnash'd his teeth, and wildly glared around,
As one who saw a spectre in the air,
And durst not look upon it, nor forbear;
Still on the youth, his eye, wherever cast,
Abhorrently return'd, and fix'd at last:
"Slaves! smite the traitor; be his limbs consign'd
To flames, his ashes scatter'd to the wind!"
He cried in tones so vehement, so loud,
Instinctively recoil'd the shuddering crowd;
And ere the guards to seize their victim rush'd,
The youth was pleading,—every breath was hush'd;
Pale, but undauntedly, he faced his foes;
Warm as he spoke his kindling spirit rose;
Well pleased, on him the Patriarch-fathers smiled,
And every mother loved him as her child.

" Monarch! to thee no traitor, here I stand;
These are my brethren, this my native land;
My native land, by sword and fire consumed,
My brethren captive, and to death foredoom'd;
To these indeed a rebel in my youth,
A fugitive apostate from the truth,
Too late repentant, I confess my crime,
And mourn o'er lost irrevocable time.
—When from thy camp by conscience urged to flee,
I plann'd no wrong, I laid no snare for thee:
Did I provoke these sons of innocence,
Against thine arms, to rise in vain defence?
No; I conjured them, ere this threaten'd hour,
In sheltering forests to escape thy power;
Firm in their rectitude, they scorn'd to fly;
Thy foes they were not, — they resolved to die.
Yet think not thou, amidst thy warlike bands,
They lie beyond redemption in thine hands:
The God in whom they trust may help them still,
They know he *can* deliver, and HE WILL:

Whether by life or death, afflicts them not,
On His decree, not thine, they rest their lot.
For me, unworthy with the just to share
Death or deliverance, this is Javan's prayer:
Mercy, O God! to these in life be shown,
I die rejoicing, if I die alone."

"Thou shalt not die alone," a voice replied,
A well-known voice — 'twas Zillah at his side;
She, while he spake, with eagerness to hear,
Step after step, unconsciously drew near;
Her bosom with severe compunction wrung,
Pleased or alarm'd, on every word she hung.
He turn'd his face; — with agonizing air,
In all the desolation of despair,
She stood; her hands to heaven uplift and clasp'd,
Then suddenly unloosed, his arm she grasp'd,
And thus, in wild apostrophes of woe,
Vented her grief while tears refused to flow.

" O I have wrong'd thee, Javan ! — Let us be
Espoused in death : — No, I will die for thee.
— Tyrant ! behold thy victim ; on my head
Be all the bitterness of vengeance shed,
But spare the innocent ; let Javan live,
Whose crime was love : — Can Javan too forgive
Love's lightest, fondest weakness, maiden-shame,
— It was not pride, — that hid my bosom-flame ?
And wilt thou mourn the poor transgressor's death,
Who says, ' I love thee,' with her latest breath ?
And when thou think'st of days and years gone by,
Will thoughts of Zillah sometimes swell thine eye ?
If ever thou hast cherish'd in thine heart
Visions of hope in which I bore a part ;
If ever thou hast long'd with me to share
One home-born joy, one home-endearing care ;
If thou didst ever love me ; — speak the word,
Which late with feign'd indifferency I heard ;
Tell me, thou lovest me still ; — haste, Javan, mark,
How high those ruffians pile the faggots, — hark,

How the flames crackle, — see, how fierce they
glare,
Like fiery serpents hissing through the air;
Farewell; I fear them not. — Now seize me, bind
These willing limbs, — ye cannot touch the mind;
Unawed, I stand on Nature's failing brink:
— Nay, look not on me, Javan, lest I shrink;
Give me thy prayers, but turn away thine eye,
That I may lift my soul to Heaven, and die."

Thus Zillah raved in passionate distress,
Till frenzy soften'd into tenderness;
Sorrow and love, with intermingling grace,
Terror and beauty, lighten'd o'er her face;
Her voice, her eye, in every soul was felt,
And Giant-hearts were moved, unwont to melt.
Javan, in wonder, pity, and delight,
Almost forgot his being at the sight;
That bending form, those suppliant accents, seem
The strange illusions of a lover's dream;

And while she clung upon his arm, he found
His limbs, his lips, as by enchantment, bound;
He dare not touch her, lest the charm should break,
He dare not move, lest he himself should wake.

But when she ceased to speak, and he to hear,
The silence startled him; — cold, shivering fear
Crept o'er his nerves; — in thought he cast his eye
Back on the world, and heaved a bitter sigh,
Thus from life's sweetest pleasures to be torn,
Just when he seem'd to new existence born,
And cease to feel, when feeling ceased to be
A fever of protracted misery,
And cease to love, when love no more was pain;
'Twas but a pang of transient weakness: — "Vain
Are all thy sorrows," falteringly he said;
"Already I am number'd with the dead;
But long and blissfully may Zillah live!
— And canst thou 'Javan's cruel scorn' forgive?

And wilt thou mourn the poor transgressor's death,
Who says, 'I love thee,' with his latest breath?
And when thou think'st of days and years gone by,
Will thoughts of Javan sometimes swell thine eye?
Ah! while I withered in thy chilling frown,
'Twas easy then to lay life's burden down;
When singly sentenced to these flames, my mind
Gloried in leaving all I loved behind;
How hast thou triumph'd o'er me in this hour!
One look hast crush'd my soul's collected power;
Thy scorn I might endure, thy pride defy,
But O thy kindness makes it hard to die!"

"Then we will die together."—"Zillah! no,
Thou shalt not perish; let me, let me go;
Behold thy parents! calm thy father's fears:
Thy mother weeps; canst thou resist her tears?"

"Away with folly!" in tremendous tone,
Exclaim'd a voice, more horrid than the groan

Of famish'd tiger leaping on his prey;
— Crouch'd at the monarch's feet the speaker lay;
But starting up, in his ferocious mien
That monarch's ancient foster-sire was seen,
The goatherd,—he who snatch'd him from the flood,
The sorcerer, who nursed him up to blood:
Who, still his evil genius, fully bent
On one bold purpose, went where'er he went;
That purpose, long in his own bosom seal'd,
Ripe for fulfilment now, he thus reveal'd.
Full in the midst he rush'd; alarm'd, aghast,
Giants and captives trembled as he pass'd,
For scarcely seem'd he of the sons of earth;
Unchronicled the hour that gave him birth;
Though shrunk his cheek, his temples deeply plough'd,
Keen was his vulture-eye, his strength unbowed;
Swarthy his features; venerably grey,
His beard dishevell'd o'er his bosom lay:

Bald was his front; but, white as snow behind,
His ample locks were scattered to the wind;
Naked he stood, save round his loins a zone
Of shagged fur, and o'er his shoulders thrown
A serpent's skin, that cross'd his breast, and round
His body thrice in glittering volumes wound.

All gazed with horror — deep unutter'd thought
In every muscle of his visage wrought;
His eye, as if his eye could see the air,
Was fix'd: up-writhing rose his horrent hair;
His limbs grew dislocate, convulsed his frame;
Deep from his chest mysterious noises came;
Now purring, hissing, barking, then they swell'd
To hideous dissonance; he shriek'd, he yell'd,
As if the Legion-fiend his soul possess'd,
And a whole hell were worrying in his breast;
Then down he dash'd himself on earth, and roll'd
In agony, till powerless, stiff, and cold,

With face upturn'd to heaven, and arms outspread,
A ghastly spectacle, he lay as dead;
The living too stood round like forms of death,
And every pulse was hush'd, and every breath.

Meanwhile the wind arose, the clouds were driven
In wat'ry masses through the waste of Heaven,
The groaning woods foretold a tempest nigh,
And silent lightning skirmish'd in the sky.

Ere long the wizard started from the ground,
Giddily reel'd, and look'd bewilder'd round,
Till on the king he fix'd his hideous gaze;
Then rapt with ecstasy and broad amaze,
He kneel'd in adoration, humbly bow'd
His face upon his hands, and cried aloud;
Yet so remote and strange his accents fell,
They seem'd the voice of an invisible:

— "Hail! king and conqueror of the peopled earth,
And more than king and conqueror! Know thy birth:
Thou art a ray of uncreated fire,
The sun himself is thy celestial sire;
The moon thy mother, who to me consign'd
Her babe in secresy, to bless mankind.
These eyes have watch'd thee rising, year by year,
More great, more glorious in thine high career.
As the young eagle plies his growing wings
In bounded flights, and sails in wider rings,
Till to the fountain of meridian day,
Full plumed and perfected, he soars away;
Thus have I mark'd thee, since thy course begun,
Still upward tending to thy sire the sun:
Now midway meet him; from yon flaming height,
Chase the vain phantoms of cherubic light;
There build a tower, whose spiral top shall rise,
Circle o'er circle, lessening to the skies:

The stars, thy brethren, in their spheres shall stand,
To hail thee welcome to thy native land;
The moon shall clasp thee in her glad embrace,
The sun behold his image in thy face,
And call thee, as his offspring and his heir,
His throne, his empire, and his orb to share."

Rising and turning his terrific head,
That chill'd beholders, thus the enchanter said:
— " Prepare, prepare the piles of sacrifice,
The power that rules on earth shall rule the skies;
Hither, O chiefs! the captive Patriarchs bring,
And pour their blood an offering to your king;
He, like his sire the sun, in transient clouds,
His veil'd divinity from mortals shrouds,
Too pure to shine till these his foes are slain,
And conquer'd Paradise hath crown'd his reign.
Haste, heap the fallen cedars on the pyres,
And give the victims living to the fires:

Shall He, in whom they vainly trust, withstand
Your sovereign's wrath, or pluck them from his hand?
We dare Him; — if He saves his servants now,
To Him let every knee in Nature bow,
For HE is GOD"—— at that most awful name,
A spasm of horror wither'd up his frame,
Even as he stood and look'd; — he looks, he stands,
With heaven-defying front, and clenched hands,
And lips half-open'd, eager from his breast
To bolt the blasphemy, by force repress;
For not in feign'd abstraction, as before,
He practised foul deceit by damned lore;
A frost was on his nerves, and in his veins
A fire, consuming with infernal pains;
Conscious, though motionless, his limbs were grown;
Alive to suffering, but alive in stone.

In silent expectation, sore amazed,
The king and chieftains on the sorcerer gazed;

Awhile no sound was heard, save through the woods,
The wind deep-thundering, and the dashing floods:
At length, with solemn step, amidst the scene,
Where that false prophet show'd his frantic mien,
Where lurid flames from green-wood altars burn'd,
Enoch stood forth; — on him all eyes were turn'd;
O'er his dim form and saintly visage fell
The light that glared upon that priest of hell.
Unutterably awful was his look;
Through every joint the Giant-monarch shook;
Shook, like Belshazzar, in his festive hall,
When the hand wrote his judgment on the wall; *
Shook, like Eliphaz, with dissolving fright, †
In thoughts amidst the visions of the night,
When as the spirit pass'd before his face,
Nor limb, nor lineament his eye could trace;
A form of mystery, that chill'd his blood,
Close at his couch in living terror stood,

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* Dan. V. v. 1—31. † Job, IV. v. 12—21.

And death-like silence, till a voice more drear,
More dreadful than the silence, reach'd his ear:
Thus from surrounding darkness Enoch brake,
And thus the Giant trembled while he spake.

END OF THE NINTH CANTO.

THE

WORLD BEFORE THE FLOOD.

CANTO TENTH.

The Prophecy of Enoch concerning the Sorcerer, the King, and the Flood. His Translation to Heaven. The Conclusion.

" The Lord is jealous: — He, who reigns on high,
Upholds the earth, and spreads abroad the sky;
His voice the moon and stars by night obey,
He sends the sun his servant forth by day:
From Him all beings came, on Him depend,
To Him return, their Author, Sovereign, End.
Who shall destroy when He would save? or stand,
When He destroys, the stroke of his right hand?

With none his name and power will He divide,
For HE is GOD, and there is none beside.

"The proud shall perish:—mark how wild his air
In impotence of malice and despair,
What frenzy fires the bold blasphemer's cheek!
He looks the curses which he cannot speak.
A hand hath touch'd him that he once defied;
Touch'd, and for ever crush'd him in his pride;
Yet shall he live, despised as fear'd before;
The great deceiver shall deceive no more;
Children shall pluck the beard of him whose arts
Palsied the boldest hands, the stoutest hearts;
His vaunted wisdom fools shall laugh to scorn,
When muttering spells, a spectacle forlorn,
A drivelling idiot, he shall fondly roam
From house to house, and never find a home."

The wizard heard his sentence, nor remain'd
A moment longer; from his trance unchain'd,

He plunged into the woods; — the Prophet then
Turn'd, and took up his parable again.

"The proud shall perish: — monarch! know thy
doom:
Thy bones shall lack the shelter of a tomb;
Not in the battle-field thine eyes shall close,
Slain upon thousands of thy slaughter'd foes;
Not on the throne of empire, nor the bed
Of weary Nature, thou shalt bow thine head:
Death lurks in ambush; Death, without a name,
Shall pluck thee from thy pinnacle of fame;
At eve, rejoicing o'er thy finish'd toil,
Thy soul shall deem the universe her spoil;
The dawn shall see thy carcase cast away,
The wolves, at sunrise, slumber on their prey.
Cut from the living, whither dost thou go?
Hades is moved to meet thee from below; *

* See a Note at the end of the Poem.

The kings thy sword had slain, the mighty dead,
tart from their thrones at thy descending tread;
They ask in scorn, — 'Destroyer! is it thus?
Art thou, — thou too, — become like one of us?
Torn from the feast of music, wine, and mirth,
The worms thy covering, and thy couch the earth:
How art thou fall'n from thine ethereal height,
Son of the morning! sunk in endless night:
How art thou fall'n, who said'st in pride of soul,
I will ascend above the starry pole,
Thence rule the adoring nations with my nod,
And set my throne above the Mount of God!
Spilt in the dust, thy blood pollutes the ground;
Sought by the eyes that fear'd thee, yet not found;
Thy chieftains pause, they turn thy relics o'er,
Then pass thee by, — for thou art known no more.
Hail to thine advent! Potentate, in hell,
Unfear'd, unflatter'd, undistinguish'd dwell;
On earth thy fierce ambition knew no rest,
A worm, a flame for ever in thy breast;

Here feel the rage of unconsuming fire,
Intense, eternal, impotent desire;
Here lie, the deathless worm's unwasting prey, '
In chains of darkness till the judgment-day.'

" Thus while the dead thy fearful welcome sing,
Thy living slaves bewail their vanish'd king.
Then, though thy reign with infamy expire,
Fulfill'd in death shall be thy vain desire;
The traitors, reeking with thy blood, shall swear,
They saw their sovereign ravish'd through the air,
And point thy star revolving o'er the night,
A baleful comet with portentous light,
Midst clouds and storms denouncing from afar
Famine and havoc, pestilence and war.
Temples, not tombs, thy monuments shall be,
And altars blaze on hills and groves to thee;
A pyramid shall consecrate thy crimes,
Thy name and honours, to succeeding times;

There shall thine image hold the highest place
Among the gods of man's revolted race!

"That race shall perish: — Men and Giants, all
Thy kindred and thy worshippers shall fall.
The babe, whose life with yesterday began,
May spring to youth, and ripen into man;
But ere his locks are tinged with fading grey,
This world of sinners shall be swept away.
Jehovah lifts his standard to the skies,
Swift at the signal winds and vapours rise;
The sun in sackcloth veils his face at noon, —
The stars are quench'd, and turn'd to blood the moon.
Heaven's fountains open, clouds dissolving roll
In mingled cataracts from pole to pole.
Earth's central sluices burst, the hills uptorn,
In rapid whirlpools down the gulf are borne:
The voice that taught the Deep his bounds to know,
'Thus far, O Sea! nor farther shalt thou go,' —

Sends forth the floods, commission'd to devour,
With boundless license and resistless power;
They own no impulse but the tempest's sway,
Nor find a limit but the light of day.

"The vision opens: — sunk beneath the wave,
The guilty share an universal grave:
One wilderness of water rolls in view,
And heaven and ocean wear one turbid hue;
Still stream unbroken torrents from the skies,
Higher beneath the inundations rise;
A lurid twilight glares athwart the scene,
Low thunders peal, faint lightnings flash between.
— Methinks I see a distant vessel ride,
A lonely object on the shoreless tide;
Within whose ark the innocent have found
Safety, while stay'd Destruction ravens round;
Thus, in the hour of vengeance, God, who knows
His servants, spares them, while he smites his foes.

" Eastward I turn ; — o'er all the deluged lands,
Unshaken yet, a mighty mountain stands,
Where Seth, of old, his flock to pasture led,
And watch'd the stars at midnight, from its head:
An island now, its dark majestic form
Scowls through the thickest ravage of the storm ;
While on its top, the monument of fame,
Built by thy murderers to adorn thy name,
Defies the shock ; — a thousand cubits high,
The sloping pyramid ascends the sky.
Thither, their latest refuge in distress,
Like hunted wolves, the rallying Giants press ;
Round the broad base of that stupendous tower,
The shuddering fugitives collect their power,
Cling to the dizzy cliff, o'er ocean bend,
And howl with terror as the deeps ascend.
The mountain's strong foundations still endure,
The heights repel the surge. — Awhile secure,
And cheer'd with frantic hope, thy votaries climb
The fabric, rising step by step sublime.

Beyond the clouds they see the summit glow
In heaven's pure daylight, o'er the gloom below;
There too thy worshipp'd image shines like fire,
In the full glory of thy fabled sire.
They hail the omen, and with heart and voice
Call on thy name, and in thy smile rejoice:
False omen! on thy name in vain they call;
Fools in their joy; — a moment and they fall.
Rent by an earthquake of the buried plain,
And shaken by the whole disrupted main,
The mountain trembles on its failing base,
It slides, it stoops, it rushes from its place;
From all the Giants bursts one drowning cry;
Hark! 'tis thy name — they curse it as they die;
Sheer to the lowest gulf the pile is hurl'd,
The last sad wreck of a devoted world.

"So fall transgressors: — Tyrant! now fulfil
Thy secret purposes, thine utmost will;

Here crown thy triumphs: — life or death decree,
The weakest here disdains thy power and thee."

Thus when the Patriarch ceased, and every ear
Still listen'd in suspense of hope and fear,
Sublime, ineffable, angelic grace
Beam'd in his meek and venerable face;
And sudden glory, streaming round his head,
O'er all his robes with lambent lustre spread;
His earthly features grew divinely bright,
His essence seem'd transforming into light.
Brief silence, like the pause between the flash,
At midnight, and the following thunder-crash,
Ensued: — Anon, with universal cry,
The Giants rush'd upon the prophet — "Die!"
The king leapt foremost from his throne; — he drew
His battle-sword, as on his mark he flew;
With aim unerring, and tempestuous sound,
The blade descended deep along the ground:

The foe was fled, and, self-o'erwhelm'd, his strength
Hurl'd to the earth his Atlantean length;
But ere his chiefs could stretch the helping arm,
He sprang upon his feet in pale alarm;
Headlong and blind with rage he search'd around,
But *Enoch walk'd with God, and was not found.*

Yet where the captives stood, in holy awe,
Rapt on the wings of cherubim, they saw
Their sainted sire ascending through the night;
He turn'd his face to bless them in his flight,
Then vanish'd: — Javan caught the Prophet's eye,
And snatch'd his mantle falling from the sky;
O'er him the Spirit of the Prophet came,
Like rushing wind awakening hidden flame:
"Where is the God of Enoch now?" he cried,*
"Captives, come forth! Despisers, shrink aside."

* "And he (*Elisha*) took the mantle of Elijah that fell from him, and smote the waters (*of Jordan*), and said,—Where is the Lord God of Elijah? — and when he had smitten the

He spake, and bursting through the Giant-throng,
Smote with the mantle as he moved along;
A power invisible their rage controll'd,
Hither and thither as he turn'd they roll'd;
Unawed, unharm'd, the ransom'd prisoners pass'd
Through ranks of foes astonied and aghast:
Close in the youth's conducting steps they trod:
— So Israel march'd when Moses raised his rod,
And led their host, enfranchised, through the wave,
The people's safeguard, the pursuers' grave.

Thus from the wolves this little flock was torn,
And sheltering in the mountain-caves till morn,
They join'd to sing, in strains of full delight,
Songs of deliverance through the dreary night.

The Giants' frenzy, when they lost their prey,
No tongue of man or angel might portray;

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waters, they parted hither and thither; and Elisha went over." II Kings, II. v. 14.

First on their idol-gods their vengeance turn'd,
Those gods on their own altar-piles they burn'd;
Then, at their sovereign's mandate, sallied forth
To rouse their host to combat, from the north;
Eager to risk their uttermost emprize,
Perish ere morn, or reign in Paradise.
Now the slow tempest, that so long had lower'd,
Keen in their faces sleet and hailstones shower'd;
The winds blew loud, the waters roar'd around,
An earthquake rock'd the agonizing ground;
Red in the west the burning mount, array'd
With tenfold terror by incumbent shade,
(For moon and stars were wrapt in dunnest gloom,)
Glared like a torch amidst creation's tomb:
So Sinai's rocks were kindled when they felt
Their Maker's footstep, and began to melt;
Darkness was his pavilion, whence He came,
Hid in the brightness of descending flame,
While storm, and whirlwind, and the trumpet's blast,
Proclaim'd his law in thunder, as he pass'd.

The Giants reach'd their camp: — the night's alarms
Meanwhile had startled all their slaves to arms;
They grasp'd their weapons as from sleep they sprang,
From tent to tent the brazen clangor rang:
The hail, the earthquake, the mysterious light
Unnerv'd their strength, o'erwhelm'd them with affright.
" Warriors! to battle; — summon all your powers;
Warriors! to conquest; — Paradise is ours,"
Exclaim'd their monarch; — not an arm was raised,
In vacancy of thought, like men amazed,
And lost amidst confounding dreams, they stood,
With palsied eyes, and horror-frozen blood.
The Giants' rage to instant madness grew;
The king and chiefs on their own legions flew,
Denouncing vengeance; — then had all the plain
Been heap'd with myriads by their leaders slain;

But ere a sword could fall, — by whirlwinds driven,
In mighty volumes, through the vault of heaven,
From Eden's summit, o'er the camp accurst,
The darting fires with noonday splendour burst;
And fearful grew the scene above, below,
With sights of mystery, and sounds of woe.
The embattled cherubim appear'd on high,
And coursers, wing'd with lightning, swept the sky;
Chariots, whose wheels with living instinct roll'd,
Spirits of unimaginable mould,
Powers, such as dwell in heaven's serenest light,
Too pure, too terrible for mortal sight,
From depth of midnight suddenly reveal'd,
In arms, against the Giants took the field.
On such an host Elisha's servant gazed,
When all the mountain round the Prophet blazed:*
With such an host, when war in heaven was wrought,
Michael against the Prince of Darkness fought.

* II Kings, VI. v. 17.

Roused by the trumpet, that shall wake the dead,
The torpid foe in consternation fled;
The Giants headlong in the uproar ran,
The king himself the foremost of the van,
Nor e'er his rushing squadrons led to fight
With swifter onset, than he led that flight.
Homeward the panic-stricken legions flew;
Their arms, their vestments, from their limbs they threw;
O'er shields and helms the reinless camel strode,
And gold and purple strew'd the desert road.
When through the Assyrian army, like a blast,
At midnight, the destroying angel pass'd,
The tyrant that defied the living God,
Precipitately thus his steps retrod;
Even by the way he came, to his own land,
Return'd, to perish by his offspring's hand. *

* II Kings, XIX. v. 33—37.

So fled the Giant-monarch ; — but unknown
The hand that smote his life ; — he died alone ;
Amidst the tumult treacherously slain ;
At morn his chieftains sought their lord in vain,
Then, reckless of the harvest of their toils,
Their camp, their captives, all their treasured spoils,
Renew'd their flight o'er eastern hills afar,
With life alone escaping from that war,
In which their king had hail'd his realm complete,
The world's last province bow'd beneath his feet.

As, when the waters of the Flood declined,
Rolling tumultuously before the wind,
The proud waves shrunk from low to lower beds,
And high the hills and higher raised their heads,
Till ocean lay, enchased with rock and strand,
As in the hollow of the Almighty's hand,
While earth with wrecks magnificent was strew'd,
And stillness reign'd o'er Nature's solitude

— Thus in a storm of horror and dismay,
All night the Giant-army sped away;
Thus on a lonely, sad, and silent scene,
The morning rose in majesty serene.

Early and joyful o'er the dewy grass,
Straight to their glen the ransom'd Patriarchs pass;
As doves released their parent-dwelling find,
They fly for life, nor cast a look behind;
And when they reach'd the dear sequester'd spot,
Enoch alone of all their train "*was not.*"
With them the bard, who from the world withdrew,
Javan, from folly and ambition flew;
Though poor his lot, within that narrow bound,
Friendship, and home, and faithful love he found:
There did his wanderings and afflictions cease,
His youth was penitence, his age was peace.

Meanwhile the scatter'd tribes of Eden's plain
Turn'd to their desolated fields again,

And join'd their brethren, captives once in fight,
But left to freedom in that dreadful flight:
Thenceforth redeem'd from war's unnumber'd woes,
Rich with the spoils of their retreated foes,
By Giant-tyranny no more opprest,
The people flourish'd, and the land had rest.

END OF THE TENTH AND LAST CANTO.

NOTE.

CANTO X. line 42, &c. This passage, the reader will perceive, is an imitation of some verses in the fourteenth Chapter of the Prophecy of Isaiah, which are applied to the fall of the King of Babylon. The following extract from Bishop Lowth's note on the original will elucidate the paraphrase:—"The regions of the Dead are laid open, and Hades is represented as rousing up the shades of the departed monarchs; they rise from their thrones to meet the King of Babylon at his coming; and insult him on his being reduced to the same low state of impotence and dissolution with themselves. * * * * * * The image of the state of the Dead, or the *Infernum Poeticum* of the Hebrews, is taken from their custom of burying, those at least of the highest rank, in large sepulchral vaults hewn in the rock. Of this kind of sepulchres there are remains at Jerusalem now extant; and some that are said to be the sepulchres of the kings of Judah. See Maundrell, p. 76. You are to form to yourself the idea of an immense subterraneous vault, a

vast gloomy cavern, all round the sides of which there are cells to receive the dead bodies: here the deceased monarchs lie in a distinguished sort of state, suitable to their former rank, each on his own couch, with his arms beside him, his sword at his head, and the bodies of his chiefs and companions around him. * * * * * These illustrious shades rise at once from their couches, as from their thrones; and advance to the entrance of the cavern to meet the King of Babylon, and to receive him with insults on his fall." — LOWTH'S ISAIAH, ch. XIV. v. 9., *et seq.*

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS.

THE

PEAK MOUNTAINS:

IN TWO PARTS.

WRITTEN AT BUXTON, IN AUGUST, 1812.

It may be useful to remark, that the scenery in the neighbourhood of Buxton, when surveyed from any of the surrounding eminences, consists chiefly of numerous and naked hills, of which many are yet unenclosed, and the rest poorly cultivated; the whole district, except in the immediate precincts of the Baths and the village of Fairfield, being miserably bare of both trees and houses.

PART I.

HEALTH on these open hills I seek,
By these delicious springs, in vain;
The rose on this deserted cheek
Shall never bloom again;
For youth is fled;—and less by time
Than sorrow torn away,

The pride, the strength of manhood's prime,
Falls to decay.

Restless and fluttering to expire,
Life's vapour sheds a cold dim light,
Frail as the evanescent fire
Amidst the murky night,
That tempts the traveller from afar
To follow, o'er the heath,
Its baleful and bewildering star
To snares of death.

A dreary torpor numbs my brain;
Now shivering pale, — now flush'd with heat;
Hurried, then slow, from vein to vein
Unequal pulses beat;
Quick palpitations heave my heart,
Anon it seems to sink;
Alarm'd at sudden sounds I start,
From shadows shrink.

Bear me, my failing limbs! O! bear
A melancholy sufferer forth,
To breathe abroad the mountain air
Fresh from the vigorous north;
To view the prospect, waste and wild,
Tempestuous or serene,
Still dear to me, as to the child
The mother's mien.

Ah! who can look on Nature's face,
And feel unholy passions move?
Her forms of majesty and grace
I cannot choose but love:
Her frowns or smiles my woes disarm,
Care and repining cease;
Her terrors awe, her beauties charm
My thoughts to peace.

Already through mine inmost soul,
A deep tranquillity I feel,

O'er every nerve, with mild control,
Her consolations steal;
This fever'd frame and fretful mind,
Jarring midst doubts and fears,
Are sooth'd to harmony: — I find
Delight in tears.

I quit the path, and track with toil
The mountains' unfrequented maze;
Deep moss and heather clothe the soil,
And many a springlet plays,
That welling from its secret source
Down rugged dells is tost,
Or spreads through rushy fens its course,
Silently lost.

The flocks and herds, that freely range
These moorlands, turn a jealous eye,
As if the form of man were strange,
To watch me stealing by;

The heifer stands aloof to gaze,
The colt comes boldly on: —
I pause, — he shakes his forelock, neighs,
Starts, and is gone.

I seek the valley: — all alone
I seem in this sequester'd place;
Not so; I meet, unseen, yet known,
My Maker face to face;
My heart perceives his presence nigh,
And hears his voice proclaim,
While bright his glory passes by,
His noblest name.

LOVE is that name, — for GOD is LOVE
— Here, where unbuilt by mortal hands,
Mountains below and heaven above,
His awful temple stands,
I worship: — "Lord! though I am dust
And ashes in thy sight,

Be thou my strength; in Thee I trust,
Be thou my light."

PART II.

Emerging from the cavern'd glen,
From steep to steep I slowly climb,
And far above the haunts of men,
I tread in air sublime!
Beneath my path the swallows sweep;
Yet higher crags impend,
And wild flowers from the fissures peep,
And rills descend.

Now on the ridges bare and bleak,
Cool round my temples sighs the gale;
Ye winds! that wander o'er the Peak;
Ye mountain-spirits! hail!

Angels of health! to man below
Ye bring celestial airs;
Bear back to Him, from whom ye blow,
Our praise and prayers.

Here, like the eagle from his nest,
I take my proud and dizzy stand;
Here, from the cliff's sublimest crest,
Look down upon the land:
O for the eagle's eye to gaze
Undazzled through this light!
O for the eagle's wings to raise
O'er all my flight!

The sun in glory walks the sky,
White fleecy clouds are floating round,
Whose shapes along the landscape fly,
— Here, chequering o'er the ground;
There, down the glens the shadows sweep,
With changing lights between;

Yonder they climb the upland steep,
Shifting the scene.

Above, beneath, immensely spread,
Valleys and hoary rocks I view,
Heights over heights exalt their head,
Of many a sombre hue;
No waving woods their flanks adorn,
No hedge-rows, gay with trees,
Encircle fields, where floods of corn
Roll to the breeze.

My soul this vast horizon fills,
Within whose undulated line
Thick stand the multitude of hills,
And clear the waters shine;
Grey mossy walls the slope ascend;
While roads, that tire the eye,
Upward their winding course extend,
And touch the sky.

With rude diversity of form,
The insulated mountains tower:
— Oft o'er these cliffs the transient storm
And partial darkness lower,
While yonder summits far away
Shine sweetly through the gloom,
Like glimpses of eternal day
Beyond the tomb.

Hither, of old, the Almighty came;
Clouds were his car, his steeds the wind:
Before Him went devouring flame,
And thunder roll'd behind:
At his approach the mountains reel'd
Like vessels to and fro;
Earth, heaving like a sea, reveal'd
The gulfs below.

Borne through the wilderness in wrath,
He seem'd in power alone a God;

But blessings follow'd in his path,
For Mercy seized his rod;
She smote the rock, — and as he pass'd
Forth gush'd a living stream;
The fire, the earthquake, and the blast
Fled as a dream.

Behold the everlasting hills,
In that convulsion scatter'd round;
Hark! from their caves the issuing rills
With sweetest music sound;
Ye lame and impotent! draw near;
With healing on her wing,
The cherub Mercy watches here
Her ancient spring.

TO

ANN AND JANE:

Verses, written on a Blank Leaf in the small Volume of HYMNS FOR INFANT MINDS.

WHEN the shades of night retire
From the morn's advancing beams,
Ere the hills are tipt with fire,
And the radiance lights the streams,
Lo, the lark begins her song,
Early on the wing, and long.

Summon'd by the signal notes,
Soon her sisters quit the lawn,
With their wildly warbling throats,
Soaring in the dappled dawn;

Brighter, warmer spread the rays,
Louder, sweeter swell their lays.

Nestlings, in their grassy beds,
Hearkening to the joyful sound,
Heavenward point their little heads,
Lowly twittering from the ground,
Ere their wings are fledged to fly,
To the chorus in the sky.

Thus, fair Minstrels, while ye sing,
Teaching infant minds to raise
To the universal King
Humble hymns of prayer and praise,
O may all who hear your voice
Look, and listen, and rejoice!

Faltering like the skylark's young,
While your numbers they record,

Soon may every heart and tongue
Learn to magnify the Lord;
And your strains divinely sweet,
Unborn millions thus repeat.

Minstrels! what reward is due
For this labour of your love?
—Through eternity may You,
In the Paradise above,
Round the dear Redeemer's feet,
All your infant readers meet!

OCCASIONAL ODE

FOR THE

ANNIVERSARY OF THE ROYAL BRITISH SYSTEM OF EDUCATION,

Held at FREEMASONS' HALL, May 16, 1812.

THE lion, o'er his wild domains,
Rules with the terror of his eye;
The eagle of the rock maintains
By force his empire in the sky;
The shark, the tyrant of the flood,
Reigns through the deep with quenchless rage:
Parent and young, unweaned from blood,
Are still the same from age to age.

Of all that live, and move, and breathe,
Man only rises o'er his birth;

He looks above, around, beneath,
At once the heir of heaven and earth:
Force, cunning, speed, which Nature gave
The various tribes throughout her plan,
Life to enjoy, from death to save, —
These are the lowest powers of Man.

From strength to strength he travels on:
He leaves the lingering brute behind;
And when a few short years are gone,
He soars, a disembodied mind:
Beyond the grave, his course sublime
Destined through nobler paths to run,
In his career the end of Time
Is but Eternity begun.

What guides him in his high pursuit,
Opens, illumines, cheers his way,
Discerns the immortal from the brute,
God's image from the mould of clay?

'Tis Knowledge: — Knowledge to the soul
Is power and liberty, and peace;
And while celestial ages roll,
The joys of Knowledge shall increase.

Hail! to the glorious plan, that spread
The light with universal beams,
And through the human desert led
Truth's living, pure, perpetual streams.
— Behold a new creation rise,
New spirit breathed into the clod,
Where'er the voice of Wisdom cries,
"Man, know thyself, and fear thy God."

A DAUGHTER TO HER MOTHER,

On her Birth-day, November 25. 1811.

THIS the day to me most dear
In the changes of the year;
Spring, the fields and woods adorning,
Spring may boast a gayer morning;
Summer noon, with brighter beams,
Gild the mountains and the streams;
Autumn, through the twilight vale,
Breathe a more delicious gale:
Yet though stern November reigns,
Wild and wintry o'er the plains,
Never does the morning rise
Half so welcome to mine eyes;

Noontide glories never shed
Rays so beauteous round my head;
Never looks the evening-scene
So enchantingly serene
As on this returning day,
When, in spirit rapt away,
Joys and sorrows I have known,
In the years for ever flown,
Wake at every sound and sight,
Reminiscence of delight,
All around me, all above,
Witnessing a Mother's love.

Love, that watch'd my early years
With conflicting hopes and fears;
Love, that through life's flowery May
Led my childhood, prone to stray;
Love, that still directs my youth
With the constancy of Truth,

Heightens every bliss it shares,
Softens and divides the cares,
Smiles away my light distress,
Weeps for joy, or tenderness:
— May that love, to latest age,
Cheer my earthly pilgrimage;
May that love, o'er death victorious,
Rise beyond the grave more glorious;
Souls, united here, would be
One to all eternity.

When these eyes, from native night,
First unfolded to the light,
On what object, fair and new,
Did they fix their fondest view?
On my Mother's smiling mien;
All the mother there was seen.
When their weary lids would close,
And she sung me to repose,

Found I not the sweetest rest
On my Mother's peaceful breast?
When my tongue from hers had caught
Sounds to utter infant thought,
Readiest then what accents came?
Those that meant my Mother's name.
When my timid feet begun,
Strangely pleased, to stand or run,
'Twas my Mother's voice and eye
Most encouraged me to try,
Safe to run, and strong to stand,
Holding by her gentle hand.

Time since then hath deeper made
Lines, where youthful dimples play'd,
Yet to me my Mother's face
Wears a more angelic grace;
And her tresses thin and hoary,
Are they not a crown of glory?

— Cruel griefs have wrung that breast,
Once my Paradise of rest;
While in these I bear a part,
Warmer grows my Mother's heart,
Closer our affections twine,
Mine with hers, and hers with mine.
— Many a name, since hers I knew,
Have I loved with honour due,
But no name shall be more dear
Than my Mother's to mine ear.
— Many a hand that Friendship plighted
Have I clasp'd, with all delighted,
But more faithful none can be
Than my Mother's hand to me.

Thus by every tie endear'd,
Thus with filial reverence fear'd,
Mother! on this day, 'tis meet
That, with salutation sweet,

I should wish you years of health,
Worldly happiness and wealth,
And when good old age is past,
Heaven's eternal peace at last!
But with these I frame a vow
For a double blessing now;
One, that richly shall combine
Your felicity with mine;
One, in which with soul and voice,
Both together may rejoice;
O what *shall* that blessing be?
— Dearest Mother! may you see
All *your* prayers fulfill'd *for me!*

STANZAS;

On reading the Verses entitled " RESIGNATION," *written by Chatterton, a few Days before his melancholy End.*

A DYING swan of Pindus sings
In wildly-mournful strains;
As Death's cold fingers snap the strings,
His suffering lyre complains.

Soft as the mist of evening wends
Along the shadowy vale;
Sad as in storms the moon ascends,
And turns the darkness pale:

So soft the melting numbers flow
From his harmonious lips;
So sad his woe-wan features show,
Just fading in eclipse.

The Bard, to dark despair resign'd,
With his expiring art,
Sings, midst the tempest of his mind,
The shipwreck of his heart.

If Hope still seem to linger nigh,
And hover o'er his head,
Her pinions are too weak to fly,
Or Hope ere now had fled.

Rash Minstrel! who can hear thy songs,
Nor long to share thy fire?
Who read thine errors and thy wrongs,
Nor execrate the lyre?

The lyre, that sunk thee to the grave,
When bursting into bloom,
That lyre the power to Genius gave
To blossom in the tomb.

Yes ; — till his memory fail with years,
Shall TIME thy strains recite ;
And while thy story swells his tears,
Thy song shall charm his flight.

THE

WILD ROSE;

On plucking one late in the Month of October.

THOU last pale promise of the waning year,
Poor sickly Rose! what dost thou here?
Why, frail flower! so late a comer,
Hast thou slept away the summer?
Since now, in Autumn's sullen reign,
When ev'ry breeze
Unrobes the trees,
And strews their annual garments on the plain,
Awaking from repose,
Thy fairy lids unclose.

Feeble, evanescent flower,
Smile away thy sunless hour;

Every daisy, in my walk,
Scorns thee from its humbler stalk:
Nothing but thy form discloses
Thy descent from royal roses:
How thine ancestors would blush
To behold thee on their bush,
Drooping thy dejected head
Where their bolder blossoms spread,
Withering in the frosty gale,
Where their fragrance fill'd the vale.

Last and meanest of thy race,
Void of beauty, colour, grace!
No bee delighted sips
Ambrosia from thy lips;
No spangling dew-drops gem
Thy fine elastic stem;
No living lustre glistens o'er thy bloom,
Thy sprigs no verdant leaves adorn,
Thy bosom breathes no exquisite perfume;

But pale thy countenance as snow,
While, unconceal'd below,
All naked glares the threatening thorn.

Around thy bell, o'er mildew'd leaves,
His ample web a spider weaves;
A wily ruffian, gaunt and grim,
His labyrinthine toils he spreads
Pensile and light; — their glossy threads
Bestrew'd with many a wing and limb;
Even in thy chalice he prepares
His deadly poison and delusive snares.

While I pause, a vagrant fly
Giddily comes buzzing by;
Round and round, on viewless wings,
Lo! the insect wheels and sings;
Closely couch'd, the fiend discovers,
Sets him with his sevenfold eyes,

And, while o'er the verge he hovers;
Seems to fascinate his prize,
As the snake's magnetic glare
Charms the flitting tribes of air,
Till the dire enchantment draws
Destined victims to his jaws.

Now midst kindred corses mangled,
On his feet alights the fly;
Ah! he feels himself entangled,
Hark! he pours a piteous cry.
Swift as Death's own arrows dart,
On his prey the spider springs,
Wounds his side, — with dexterous art
Winds the web about his wings;
Quick as he came, recoiling then,
The villain vanishes into his den.
The desperate fly perceives too late
The hastening crisis of his fate;

Disaster crowds upon disaster,
And every struggle to get free
Snaps the hopes of liberty,
And draws the knots of bondage faster.

Again the spider glides along the line;
Hold, murderer! hold; — the game is mine.
— Captive! unwarn'd by danger, go,
Frolic awhile in light and air;
Thy fate 'tis easy to foreshow,
Preserved —— to perish in a safer snare!
Spider! thy worthless life I spare;
Advice on thee 'twere vain to spend,
Thy wicked ways thou wilt not mend, —
Then haste thee, spoiler, mend thy net;
Wiser than I
Must be yon fly,
If he escapes thy trammels yet;
Most eagerly the trap is sought
In which a fool has once been caught.

And thou, poor Rose! whose livid leaves expand,
Cold to the sun, untempting to the hand,
Bloom unadmired, — uninjured die;
Thine aspect, squalid and forlorn,
Ensures thy peaceful, dull decay;
Hadst thou with blushes hid thy thorn,
Grown "sweet to sense and lovely to the eye,"
I might have pluck'd thy flower,
Worn it an hour,
"Then cast it like a loathsome weed away." *

* Otway's Orphan.

ON FINDING

THE FEATHERS OF A LINNET

Scattered on the Ground, in a solitary Walk.

THESE little relics, hapless bird!
That strew the lonely vale,
With silent eloquence record
Thy melancholy tale.

Like Autumn's leaves, that rustle round
From every withering tree,
These plumes, dishevell'd o'er the ground,
Alone remain of thee.

Some hovering kite's rapacious maw
Hath been thy timeless grave;
No pitying eye thy murder saw,
No friend appear'd to save.

Heaven's thunder smite the guilty foe!
No: — spare the tyrant's breath,
Till wintry winds, and famine slow,
Avenge thy cruel death!

But every feather of thy wing
Be quicken'd where it lies,
And at the soft return of spring,
A fragrant cowslip rise!

Few were thy days, thy pleasures few,
Simple and unconfined;
On sunbeams every moment flew,
Nor left a care behind.

In spring to build thy curious nest,
And woo thy merry bride,
Carol and fly, and sport and rest,
Was all thy humble pride.

Happy beyond the lot of kings,
Thy bosom knew no smart,
Till the last pang, that tore the strings
From thy dissever'd heart.

When late to secret griefs a prey,
I wander'd slowly here,
Wild from the copse an artless lay,
Like magic, won mine ear.

Perhaps 'twas thy last evening song,
That exquisitely stole
In sweetest melody along,
And harmonized my soul.

Now, blithe musician! now no more
Thy mellow pipe resounds,
But jarring drums at distance roar,
And yonder howl the hounds:—

The hounds, that through the echoing wood
The panting hare pursue;
The drums, that wake the cry of blood,
— The voice of Glory too!

Here at my feet thy frail remains,
Unwept, unburied, lie,
Like victims on embattled plains,
Forsaken where they die.

Yet could the Muse, whose strains rehearse
Thine unregarded doom,
Enshrine thee in immortal verse,
Kings should not scorn thy tomb.

Though brief as thine my tuneful date,
When wandering near this spot,
The sad memorials of thy fate
Shall never be forgot.

While doom'd the lingering pangs to feel
Of many a nameless fear,
One truant sigh from these I'll steal,
And drop one willing tear.

SONNET.

Imitated from the Italian of P. Salandri.

TO A BRIDE.

THE more divinely beautiful thou art,
Lady! of love's inconstancy beware;
Watch o'er thy charms, and with an angel's care
O guard thy maiden purity of heart:
At every whisper of temptation start;
The lightest breathings of unhallow'd air
Love's tender, trembling lustre will impair,
Till all the light of innocence depart.

Fresh from the bosom of an Alpine hill,
When the coy fountain sparkles into day,
And sunbeams bathe and brighten in its rill;
If here a plant, and there a flower, in play,
Bending to sip, the little channel fill,
It ebbs, and languishes, and dies away.

SONNET.

Imitated from the Italian of Petrarch.

LONELY and thoughtful o'er deserted plains,
I pass with melancholy steps and slow,
Mine eyes intent to shun, where'er I go,
The track of man: — from him to hide my pains,
No refuge save the wilderness remains:
The curious multitude would quickly know,
Amidst affected smiles, the cherish'd woe
That wrings my bosom, and consumes my veins.

O that the rocks and streams of solitude,
The vales and woods alone, my griefs might see!
But paths, however secret, wild and rude,
I find not from tormenting passion free;
Where'er I wander, still by Love pursued,
With Him I hold communion, He with Me.

SONNET.

Imitated from the Italian of Gaetana Passerini.

*On the Siege of Genoa by the French Army in 16**.*

Liberty speaks.

" My native Genoa! if with tearless eye,
Prone in the dust thy beauteous form I see,
Think not thy daughter's heart is dead to thee;
'Twere treason, O, my mother! here to sigh,
For here, majestic though in ashes, lie
Trophies of valour, skill, and constancy;
Here at each glance, each footstep, I descry
The proud memorials of thy love to me.

" Conquest to noble suffering lost the day,
And glorious was thy vengeance on the foe,
— He saw thee perish, yet not feel the blow."
Thus Liberty, exulting on her way,
Kiss'd the dear relics, mouldering as they lay,
And cried, — "In ruins? *Yes!* — In slavery? *No.*"

SONNET.

Imitated from the Italian of Benedetto dall' Uva.

On the Siege of Famagusta, in the Island of Cyprus, by the Turks, in 1571.

THUS saith the Lord: — "In whom shall Cyprus trust,
With all her crimes, her luxury, and pride?
In her voluptuous loves will she confide,
Her harlot-daughters, and her queen of lust?
My day is come when o'er her neck in dust,
Vengeance and fury shall triumphant ride,
Death and captivity the spoil divide,
And Cyprus perish: — I the Lord am just.

"Then he that bought, and he that sold in thee,
Thy princely merchants, shall their loss deplore,
Brothers in ruin as in fraud before;
And thou, who mad'st thy rampart of the sea,
Less by thy foes cast down than crush'd by Me!
Thou, Famagusta! fall, and rise no more."

DEPARTED DAYS;

A RHAPSODY:

Written on visiting FULNECK, *in Yorkshire, where the Author was educated, in the Spring of* 1806.

DAYS of my childhood, hail!
Whose gentle spirits wandering here,
Down in the visionary vale,
Before mine eyes appear,
Benignly pensive, beautifully pale;
O days for ever fled, for ever dear,
Days of my childhood, hail!

Joys of my early hours!
The swallows on the wing,

The bees among the flowers,
The butterflies of spring,
Light as their lovely moments flew,
Were not more gay, more innocent than you:
And fugitive as they,
Like butterflies in spring,
Like bees among the flowers,
Like swallows on the wing,
How swift, how soon ye passed away,
Joys of my early hours!

The loud Atlantic ocean,
On Scotland's rugged breast,
Rocks, with harmonious motion,
His weary waves to rest,
And gleaming round her emerald isles,
In all the pomp of sunset smiles.
On that romantic shore
My parents hail'd their first-born boy:

A mother's pangs my mother bore,
My father felt a father's joy:
My father, mother, — parents now no more!
Beneath the Lion-Star they sleep,
Beyond the western deep,
And when the sun's noon-glory crests the waves,
He shines without a shadow on their graves. *

Sweet seas, and smiling shores!
When no tornado-demon roars,
Resembling that celestial clime
Where, with the spirits of the blest,
Beyond the hurricanes of Time,
From all their toils my parents rest:
There skies, eternally serene,
Diffuse ambrosial balm
Through sylvan isles for ever green,
O'er seas for ever calm;

* In the islands of Barbadoes and Tobago.

While saints and angels, kindling in his rays,
On the full glory of the Godhead gaze,
And taste and prove, in that transporting sight,
Joy without sorrow, without darkness light.

Light without darkness, without sorrow joy,
On earth are all unknown to man;
Here, while I roved, a heedless boy,
Here, while through paths of peace I ran,
My feet were vex'd with puny snares,
My bosom stung with insect-cares:
But ah! what light and little things
Are childhood's woes! — they break no rest;
Like dew-drops on the skylark's wings,
While slumbering in his grassy nest,
Gone in a moment, when he springs
To meet the morn with open breast,
As o'er the eastern hills her banners glow,
And veil'd in mist the valley sleeps below.

Like him, on these delightful plains,
I taught, with fearless voice,
The echoing woods to sound my strains,
The mountains to rejoice.
Hail! to the trees beneath whose shade,
Rapt into worlds unseen, I stray'd;
Hail! to the stream that purl'd along
In hoarse accordance to my song;
My song that pour'd uncensured lays,
Tuned to a dying Saviour's praise,
In numbers simple, wild and sweet,
As were the flowers beneath my feet; —
Those flowers are dead,
Those numbers fled,
Yet o'er my secret thought,
From cold Oblivion's silent gloom,
Their music to mine ear is brought,
Like voices from the tomb.

As yet in this untainted breast
No baleful passion burn'd,
Ambition had not banish'd rest,
Nor hope had earthward turn'd;
Proud Reason still in shadow lay,
And in my firmament alone,
Forerunner of the day,
The dazzling star of wonder shone,
By whose enchanting ray
Creation open'd on my earliest view,
And all was beautiful, for all was new.

Too soon my mind's awakening powers
Made the light slumbers flee,
Then vanish'd with the golden hours,
The morning dreams of Infancy;
Sweet were those slumbers, dear those dreams to me;
And yet to mournful Memory lingering here,
Sweet are those slumbers, and those dreams are dear:
For hither, from my native clime,

The hand that leads Orion forth,
And wheels Arcturus round the north,
Brought me, in Life's exulting prime:
— Blest be that hand! — Whether it shed
Mercies or judgments on my head,
Extend the sceptre or exalt the rod, —
Blest be that hand! — It is the hand of GOD.

PRISON AMUSEMENTS:

WRITTEN

During Nine Months of Confinement in the Castle of York, in the Years 1795 *and* 1796.

EXTRACT

FROM

THE ORIGINAL PREFACE.

THESE Pieces were composed in bitter moments, amid the horrors of a gaol, under the pressure of sickness. They were the transcripts of melancholy feelings,—the warm effusions of a bleeding heart. The writer amused his imagination with attiring his sorrows in verse, that under the romantic appearance of fiction, he might sometimes forget that his misfortunes were real.

The reader may be curious to be informed of the circumstances to which these trifles owe their existence. Suffice it to say, the writer is very young, and has been very unfortunate. Twice, in the course of twelve months, he was sentenced to the penalties of fine and imprisonment for imputed offences: In January, 1795, and again in January, 1796; the first time—a fine of twenty pounds, and three months' confinement: the second—six months' confinement, and a fine of thirty pounds.

PRISON AMUSEMENTS.

VERSES

TO

A ROBIN RED-BREAST.

Who visits the Window of my Prison every Day.

I.

WELCOME, pretty little stranger!
Welcome to my lone retreat!
Here, secure from every danger,
Hop about, and chirp, and eat.
Robin! how I envy thee,
Happy child of Liberty!

II.

Now, though tyrant Winter, howling,
Shakes the world with tempests round,
Heaven above with vapours scowling,
Frost imprisons all the ground; —
Robin! what are these to thee?
Thou art blest with liberty.

III.

Though yon fair majestic river *
Mourns in solid icy chains;
Though yon flocks and cattle shiver,
On the desolated plains; —
Robin! thou art gay and free,
Happy in thy liberty.

IV.

Hunger never shall distress thee,
While my cates one crum afford;

* The Ouse.

Colds nor cramps shall e'er oppress thee;
Come and share my humble board.
Robin! come and live with me,
Live—yet still at liberty.

V.

Soon shall Spring in smiles and blushes,
Steal upon the blooming year;
Then, amid the enamour'd bushes,
Thy sweet song shall warble clear;
Then shall I too, join'd with thee,
Swell the Hymn of Liberty.

VI.

Should some rough unfeeling Dobbin,
In this iron-hearted age,
Seize thee on thy nest, my Robin!
And confine thee in a cage,
Then, poor pris'ner! think of me,
Think — and sigh for liberty.

Feb. 2. 1795.

MOONLIGHT.

I.

GENTLE Moon! a captive calls;
Gentle Moon! awake, arise;
Gild the prison's sullen walls;
Gild the tears that drown his eyes.

II.

Throw thy veil of clouds aside;
Let those smiles that light the pole
Through the liquid ether glide, —
Glide into the mourner's soul.

III.

Cheer his melancholy mind;
Soothe his sorrows, heal his smart:

Let thine influence, pure, refined,
Cool the fever of his heart.

IV.

Chase despondency and care,
Fiends that haunt the GUILTY breast:
Conscious virtue braves despair;
Triumphs most when most oppress'd.

V.

Now I feel thy power benign
Swell my bosom, thrill my veins;
As thy beams the brightest shine,
When the deepest midnight reigns.

VI.

Say, fair shepherdess of night!
Who thy starry flock dost lead
Unto rills of living light,
On the blue ethereal mead;

VII.

At this moment, dost thou see,
From thine elevated sphere,
One kind friend who thinks of me,—
Thinks, and drops a feeling tear?

VIII.

On a brilliant beam convey
This soft whisper to his breast,
"Wipe that generous drop away;
He for whom it falls is blest:

IX.

"Blest with Freedom unconfined;
Dungeons cannot hold the Soul:
Who can chain the immortal Mind?
—None but He who spans the pole."

X.

Fancy, too, the nimble fairy,
With her subtle magic spell,

In romantic visions airy
  Steals the captive from his cell.

XI.

On her moonlight pinions borne,
  Far he flies from grief and pain;
Never, never to be torn
  From his friends and home again.

XII.

Stay, thou dear delusion! stay;
  Beauteous bubble! do not break;
— Ah! the pageant flits away;
  — Who from such a dream would wake?

March 7. 1795.

THE

CAPTIVE NIGHTINGALE.

I.

NOCTURNAL Silence reigning,
A Nightingale began,
In his cold cage complaining
Of cruel-hearted Man:
His drooping pinions shiver'd,
Like wither'd moss so dry;
His heart with anguish quiver'd,
And sorrow dimm'd his eye.

II.

His grief in soothing slumbers
No balmy power could steep;

So sweetly flow'd his numbers,
The music seem'd to weep.
Unfeeling Sons of Folly!
To you the Mourner sung;
While tender melancholy
Inspired his plaintive tongue.

III.

"Now reigns the moon in splendour
Amid the heaven serene;
A thousand stars attend her,
And glitter round their queen:
Sweet hours of inspiration!
When I, the still night long,
Was wont to pour my passion,
And breathe my soul in Song.

IV.

"But now, delicious season!
In vain thy charms invite:

Entomb'd in this dire prison,
I sicken at the sight.
This morn, this vernal morning,
The happiest bird was I,
That hail'd the sun returning,
Or swam the liquid sky.

V.

"In yonder breezy bowers,
Among the foliage green,
I spent my tuneful hours,
In solitude serene:
There soft Melodia's beauty
First fired my ravish'd eye;
I vow'd eternal duty;
She look'd — half kind, half shy!

VI.

"My plumes with ardour trembling,
I flutter'd, sigh'd, and sung;

The fair one, still dissembling,
Refused to trust my tongue;
A thousand tricks inventing,
A thousand arts I tried:
Till the sweet nymph, relenting,
Confess'd herself my bride.

VII.

"Deep in the grove retiring,
To choose our secret seat,
We found an oak aspiring,
Beneath whose mossy feet,
Where the tall herbage swelling
Had form'd a green alcove,
We built our humble dwelling,
And hallow'd it with love.

VIII.

"Sweet scene of vanish'd pleasure!
This day, this fatal day,

My little ones, my treasure,
My spouse, were stolen away!
I saw the precious plunder,
All in a napkin bound;
Then smit with human thunder,
I flutter'd on the ground!

IX.

"O Man! beneath whose vengeance
All Nature bleeding lies!
Who charged thine impious engines
With lightning from the skies?
Ah! is thy bosom iron?
Does it thine heart enchain?
As these cold bars environ,
And, captive, me detain?

X.

"Where are my offspring tender?
Where is my widow'd mate?

— Thou Guardian Moon! defend her!
Ye stars! avert their fate! —
O'erwhelm'd with killing anguish,
In iron cage, forlorn,
I see my poor babes languish:
I hear their mother mourn!

XI.

"O Liberty! inspire me,
And eagle-strength supply!
Thou, Love almighty! fire me!
I'll burst my prison — or die!"
He sung; and forward bounded;
He broke the yielding door!
But, with the shock confounded,
Fell, lifeless, on the floor!

XII.

Farewell, then, Philomela:
Poor martyr'd bird! adieu!

There's one, my charming fellow!
Who thinks, who feels, like you:
The bard that pens thy story,
Amidst a prison's gloom,
Sighs, — not for wealth nor glory,
— But freedom, or thy tomb!

Feb. 12. 1796.

ODE

TO

THE EVENING STAR.

HAIL! resplendent Evening Star!
Brightly beaming from afar;
Fairest gem of purest light
In the diadem of night.

Now thy mild and modest ray
Lights to rest the weary day;
While the lustre of thine eye
Sweetly trembles through the sky;
As the closing shadows roll
Deep and deeper round the pole,

Lo! thy kindling legions bright
Steal insensibly to light;
Till, magnificent and clear,
Shines the spangled hemisphere.

In these calmly pleasing hours,
When the soul expands her powers,
And, on wings of contemplation,
Ranges round the vast creation;
When the mind's immortal eye
Bounds, with rapture, to the sky,
And, in one triumphant glance,
Comprehends the wide expanse,
Where stars, and suns, and systems shine,
Faint beams of MAJESTY DIVINE; —
— Now, when visionary sleep
Lulls the world in slumbers deep;
When silence, awfully profound,
Breathes solemn inspiration round;

Queen of beauty! queen of stars!
Smile upon these frowning bars,
Softly sliding from thy sphere,
Condescend to visit here.

In the circle of this cell,
No tormenting demons dwell;
Round these walls in wild despair,
No agonising spectres glare:
Here reside no furies gaunt;
No tumultuous passions haunt;
Fell revenge, nor treachery base;
Guilt, with bold unblushing face;
Pale remorse, within whose breast
Scorpion horrors murder rest;
Coward malice, hatred dire,
Lawless rapine, dark desire;
Pining envy, frantic ire;
Never, never dare intrude
On this pensive solitude.

— But a sorely-hunted deer
Finds a sad asylum here:
One, whose panting sides have been
Pierced with many an arrow keen;
One, whose deeply-wounded heart
Bears the scars of many a dart.
In the herd he vainly mingled;
From the herd, when harshly singled,
Too proud to fly, he scorn'd to yield;
Too weak to fight, he lost the field;
Assail'd, and captive led away,
He fell a poor, inglorious prey.

Deign then, gentle Star! to shed
Thy soft lustre round mine head:
With cheering radiance gild the room,
And melt the melancholy gloom.
When I see thee, from thy sphere,
Trembling like a brilliant tear,

Shed a sympathising ray
On the pale expiring day,
Then a welcome emanation
Of reviving consolation,
Swifter than the lightning's dart,
Glances through my glowing heart;
Soothes my sorrows, lulls my woes,
In a soft, serene repose.
Like the undulating motion
Of the deep, majestic ocean,
When the whispering billows glide
Smooth along the tranquil tide;
Calmly thus, prepar'd, resign'd,
Swells the independent mind.

But when through clouds thy beauteous light
Streams, in splendour, on the night,
Hope, like thee, my leading star,
Through the sullen gloom of care,

Sheds an animating ray
On the dark, bewildering way.
Starting, then, with sweet surprise,
Tears of transport swell mine eyes;
Wildly through each throbbing vein,
Rapture thrills with pleasing pain;
All my fretful fears are banish'd,
All my dreams of anguish vanish'd;
Energy my soul inspires,
And wakes the muse's hallow'd fires;
Rich in melody, my tongue
Warbles forth spontaneous song.

Thus my prison moments gay,
Swiftly, sweetly, glide away;
Till the last long day declining,
O'er yon tower thy glory shining,
Shall the welcome signal be
Of to-morrow's liberty!

Liberty, triumphant borne
On the rosy wings of morn,
Liberty shall then return!

Rise to set the captive free;
Rise, O sun of Liberty!

Feb. 29. 1796.

SOLILOQUY
OF
A WATER-WAGTAIL,
ON
THE WALLS OF YORK CASTLE.

I.

On the walls that guard my prison,
Swelling with fantastic pride,
Brisk and merry as the season,
I a feather'd coxcomb spied:
When the little hopping elf
Gaily thus amused himself.

II.

" Hear your sovereign's proclamation,
All good subjects, young and old!

I'm the Lord of the Creation ;
I — a Water-Wagtail bold !
All around, and all you see,
All the world was made for ME !

III.

" Yonder sun, so proudly shining,
Rises — when I leave my nest ;
And, behind the hills declining,
Sets — when I retire to rest :
Morn and evening, thus you see,
Day and night, were made for ME !

IV.

" Vernal gales to love invite me :
Summer sheds for me her beams ;
Autumn's jovial scenes delight me ;
Winter paves with ice my streams ;
All the year is mine, you see ;
Seasons change, like moons, for ME !

V.

" On the heads of giant mountains,
Or beneath the shady trees;
By the banks of warbling fountains,
I enjoy myself at ease:
Hills and valleys, thus you see,
Groves and rivers, made for ME!

VI.

" Boundless are my vast dominions;
I can hop, or swim, or fly;
When I please, my towering pinions
Trace my empire through the sky:
Air and elements, you see,
Heaven and earth, were made for ME!

VII.

" Birds and insects, beasts and fishes,
All their humble distance keep;

Man, subservient to my wishes,
Sows the harvest which I reap:
Mighty man himself, you see,
All that breathe, were made for ME.

VIII.

"'Twas for my accommodation,
Nature rose when I was born;
Should I die — the whole creation
Back to nothing would return:
Sun, moon, stars, the world, you see,
Sprung — exist — will fall with me!"

IX.

Here the pretty prattler, ending,
Spread his wings to soar away;
But a cruel Hawk descending,
Pounced him up — an helpless prey.
— Couldst thou not, poor Wagtail! see,
That the Hawk was made for THEE?

April 15. 1796.

THE

PLEASURES OF IMPRISONMENT:

In Two Epistles to a Friend.

EPISTLE I.

You ask, my friend, and well you may,
You ask me how I spend the day;
I'll tell you, in unstudied rhyme,
How wisely I befool my time:
Expect not wit, nor fancy then,
In this effusion of my pen;
These idle lines — they might be worse —
Are simple prose, in simple verse.

Each morning, then, at five o'clock,
The adamantine doors unlock;

Bolts, bars, and portals, crash and thunder;
The gates of iron burst asunder;
Hinges that creak, and keys that jingle,
With clattering chains, in concert mingle:
So sweet the din, your dainty ear,
For joy, would break its drum to hear;
While my dull organs, at the sound,
Rest in tranquillity profound:
Fantastic dreams amuse my brain,
And waft my spirit home again:
Though captive all day long, 'tis true,
At night I am as free as you;
Not ramparts high, nor dungeons deep,
Can hold me when I'm fast asleep:

But every thing is good in season,
I dream at large — and wake in prison.
Yet think not, sir, I lie too late,
I rise as early even as eight:

Ten hours of drowsiness are plenty,
For any man, in four-and-twenty.
You smile — and yet 'tis nobly done,
I'm but five hours behind the sun!

When dress'd, I to the yard repair,
And breakfast on the pure, fresh air:
But though this choice Castalian cheer
Keeps both the head and stomach clear,
For reasons strong enough with me,
I mend the meal with toast and tea.
Now air and fame, as poets sing,
Are both the same, the self-same thing:
Yet bards are not cameleons quite,
And heavenly food is very light;
Who ever dined or supp'd on fame,
And went to bed upon a name?

Breakfast despatch'd, I sometimes read,
To clear the vapours from my head;

For books are magic charms, I ween,
Both for the crotchets and the spleen.
When genius, wisdom, wit abound,
Where sound is sense, and sense is sound;
When art and nature both combine,
And live, and breathe, in every line;
The reader glows along the page
With all the author's native rage!
But books there are with nothing fraught, —
Ten thousand words, and ne'er a thought;
Where periods without period crawl,
Like caterpillars on a wall,
That fall to climb, and climb to fall;
While still their efforts only tend
To keep them from their journey's end.
The readers yawn with pure vexation,
And nod — but not with approbation.
In such a fog of dulness lost,
Poor Patience must give up the ghost;

Not Argus' eyes awake could keep,
Even Death might read himself to sleep.

At half-past ten, or thereabout,
My eyes are all upon the scout,
To see the lounging post-boy come,
With letters or with news from home.
Believe it, on a captive's word,
Although the doctrine seem absurd,
The paper-messengers of friends
For absence almost make amends:
But if you think I jest or lie,
Come to York Castle, sir, and try.

Sometimes to fairy land I rove:
Those iron rails become a grove;
These stately buildings fall away
To moss-grown cottages of clay;
Debtors are changed to jolly swains,
Who pipe and whistle on the plains;

Yon felons grim, with fetters bound,
Are satyrs wild, with garlands crown'd:
Their clanking chains are wreaths of flowers;
Their horrid cells ambrosial bowers:
The oaths, expiring on their tongues,
Are metamorphosed into songs;
While wretched female prisoners, lo!
Are Dian's nymphs of virgin snow.
Those hideous walls with verdure shoot;
These pillars bend with blushing fruit;
That dunghill swells into a mountain,
The pump becomes a purling fountain;
The noisome smoke of yonder mills,
The circling air with fragrance fills;
This horse-pond spreads into a lake,
And swans of ducks and geese I make;
Sparrows are changed to turtle-doves,
That bill and coo their pretty loves;
Wagtails, turn'd thrushes, charm the vales,
And tomtits sing like nightingales.

No more the wind through key-holes whistles,
But sighs on beds of pinks and thistles;
The rattling rain that beats without,
And gurgles down the leaden spout,
In light, delicious dew distils,
And melts away in amber rills;
Elysium rises on the green,
And health and beauty crown the scene.

Then by the enchantress Fancy led,
On violet banks I lay my head;
Legions of radiant forms arise,
In fair array, before mine eyes;
Poetic visions gild my brain,
And melt in liquid air again!
As in a magic-lantern clear,
Fantastic images appear,
That beaming from the spectred glass,
In beautiful succession pass,

Yet steal the lustre of their light
From the deep shadow of the night:
Thus, in the darkness of my head,
Ten thousand shining things are bred,
That borrow splendour from the gloom,
As glow-worms twinkle in a tomb.

But lest these glories should confound me,
Kind Dulness draws her curtain round me;
The visions vanish in a trice,
And I awake as cold as ice:
Nothing remains of all the vapour,
Save — what I send you — ink and paper.

Thus flow my morning hours along,
Smooth as the numbers of my song:
Yet let me wander as I will,
I feel I am a prisoner still.
Thus Robin, with the blushing breast,
Is ravish'd from his little nest

By barbarous boys, who bind his leg,
To make him flutter round a peg:
See the glad captive spreads his wings,
Mounts, in a moment, mounts and sings,
When suddenly the cruel chain
Twitches him back to earth again.
— The clock strikes one — I can't delay,
For dinner comes but once a day;
At present, worthy friend, farewell;
But by to-morrow's post I'll tell,
How, during these half-dozen moons,
I cheat the lazy afternoons.

June 13. 1796.

THE

PLEASURES OF IMPRISONMENT.

EPISTLE II.

In this sweet place, where freedom reigns,
Secured by bolts, and snug in chains;
Where innocence and guilt together
Roost like two turtles of a feather;
Where debtors safe at anchor lie
From saucy duns and bailiffs sly;
Where highwaymen and robbers stout
Would, rather than break in, break out;
Where all's so guarded and recluse,
That none his liberty can lose;
Here each may, as his means afford,
Dine like a pauper or a lord,

And those who can't the cost defray
May live to dine another day.

Now let us ramble o'er the green,
To see and hear what's heard and seen;
To breathe the air, enjoy the light,
And hail yon sun, who shines as bright
Upon the dungeon and the gallows
As on York Minster or Kew Palace.
And here let us the scene review:
That's the old castle, this the new;
Yonder the felons walk, and there
The lady-prisoners take the air;
Behind are solitary cells,
Where hermits live like snails in shells;
There stands the chapel for good people;
That black balcony is the steeple;
How gaily spins the weather-cock!
How proudly shines the crazy clock!

A clock, whose wheels eccentric run,
More like my head than like the sun:
And yet it shows us, right or wrong,
The days are only twelve hours long;
Though captives often reckon here
Each day a month, each month a year.
There honest William stands in state,
The porter, at the horrid gate;
Yet no ill-natured soul is he,
Entrance to all the world is free;
One thing, indeed, is rather hard,
Egress is frequently debarr'd:
Of all the joys within that reign,
There's none like — getting out again!
Across the green, behold the court,
Where jargon reigns and wigs resort;
Where bloody tongues fight bloodless battles,
For life and death, for straws and rattles;
Where juries yawn their patience out,
And judges dream in spite of gout.

There, on the outside of the door
(As sang a wicked wag of yore),
Stands Mother Justice, tall and thin,
Who never yet hath ventured in.
The cause, my friend, may soon be shown,
The lady was a stepping-stone,
Till — though the metamorphose odd is —
A chisel made the block a goddess:
— "Odd!" did I say? — I'm wrong this time;
But I was hamper'd for a rhyme:
Justice at — I could tell you where —
Is just the same as justice there.

But lo! my frisking dog attends,
The kindest of four-footed friends;
Brim-full of giddiness and mirth,
He is the prettiest fool on earth.
The rogue is twice a squirrel's size,
With short snub nose and big black eyes;

A cloud of brown adorns his tail,
That curls and serves him for a sail;
The same deep auburn dyes his ears,
That never were abridged by shears:
While white around, as Lapland snows,
His hair, in soft profusion, flows;
Waves on his breast, and plumes his feet
With glossy fringe, like feathers fleet.
A thousand antic tricks he plays,
And looks at one a thousand ways;
His wit, if he has any, lies
Somewhere between his tail and eyes;
Sooner the light those eyes will fail,
Than *Billy* cease to wag that tail.

And yet the fellow ne'er is safe
From the tremendous beak of Ralph;
A raven grim, in black and blue,
As arch a knave as e'er you knew;

Who hops about with broken pinions,
And thinks these walls his own dominions.
This wag a mortal foe to Bill is,
They fight like Hector and Achilles;
Bold Billy runs with all his might,
And conquers, Parthian-like, in flight;
While Ralph his own importance feels,
And wages endless war with heels:
Horses and dogs, and geese and deer,
He slily pinches in the rear;
They start surprised with sudden pain,
While honest Ralph sheers off again.

A melancholy stag appears,
With rueful look and flagging ears;
A feeble, lean, consumptive elf,
The very picture of myself!
My ghost-like form, and new-moon phiz,
Are just the counterparts of his:

Blasted like me by fortune's frown;
Like me, TWICE hunted, TWICE run down!
Like me pursued, almost to death,
He's come to gaol to save his breath!
Still, on his painful limbs, are seen
The scars where worrying dogs have been;
Still, on his woe-imprinted face,
I weep a broken heart to trace.
Daily the mournful wretch I feed
With crumbs of comfort and of bread;
But man, false man! so well he knows,
He deems the species all his foes:
In vain I smile to soothe his fear,
He will not, dare not, come too near;
He lingers — looks — and fain he would —
Then strains his neck to reach the food.
Oft as his plaintive looks I see,
A brother's bowels yearn in me.
What rocks and tempests yet await
Both him and me, we leave to fate:

We know, by past experience taught,
That innocence availeth nought:
I feel, and 'tis my proudest boast,
That conscience is itself an host:
While this inspires my swelling breast,
Let all forsake me — I'm at rest;
Ten thousand deaths, in every nerve,
I'd rather SUFFER than DESERVE.

But yonder comes the victim's wife,
A dappled doe, all fire and life:
She trips along with gallant pace,
Her limbs alert, her motion grace:
Soft as the moonlight fairies bound,
Her footsteps scarcely kiss the ground;
Gently she lifts her fair brown head,
And licks my hand, and begs for bread:
I pat her forehead, stroke her neck,
She starts and gives a timid squeak;

Then, while her eye with brilliance burns,
The fawning animal returns;
Pricks her bob-tail, and waves her ears,
And happier than a queen appears:
— Poor beast! from fell ambition free,
And all the woes of LIBERTY;
Born in a gaol, a prisoner bred,
No dreams of hunting rack thine head;
Ah! mayst thou never pass these bounds
To see the world — and feel the hounds!
Still all her beauty, all her art,
Have fail'd to win her husband's heart;
Her lambent eyes, and lovely chest;
Her swan-white neck, and ermine breast;
Her taper legs, and spotty hide,
So softly, delicately pied,
In vain their fond allurements spread, —
To love and joy her spouse is dead.

But lo! the evening shadows fall
Broader and browner from the wall;
A warning voice, like curfew bell,
Commands each captive to his cell;
My faithful dog and I retire,
To play and chatter by the fire:
Soon comes a turnkey with "Good night, sir!"
And bolts the door with all his might, sir:
Then leisurely to bed I creep,
And sometimes wake — and sometimes sleep.
These are the joys that reign in prison,
And if I'm happy 'tis with reason:
Yet still this prospect o'er the rest
Makes every blessing doubly blest;
That soon these pleasures will be vanish'd,
And I, from all these comforts, banish'd!

June 14. 1796.

THE BRAMIN.

EXTRACT FROM CANTO I.

ONCE, on the mountain's balmy lap reclin'd,
The sage unlock'd the treasures of his mind;
Pure from his lips sublime instruction came,
As the blest altar breathes celestial flame;
A band of youths and virgins round him press'd,
Whom thus the prophet and the sage address'd:

"Through the wide universe's boundless range,
All that exist decay, revive, and change:
No atom torpid or inactive lies;
A being, once created, never dies.

The waning moon, when quench'd in shades of night,
Renews her youth with all the charms of light;
The flowery beauties of the blooming year
Shrink from the shivering blast, and disappear;
Yet, warm'd with quickening showers of genial rain,
Spring from their graves, and purple all the plain.
As day the night, and night succeeds the day,
So death re-animates, so lives decay:
Like billows on the undulating main,
The swelling fall, the falling swell again;
Thus on the tide of time, inconstant, roll
The dying body and the living soul.
In every animal, inspired with breath,
The flowers of life produce the seeds of death;—
The seeds of death, though scatter'd in the tomb,
Spring with new vigour, vegetate and bloom.

"When wasted down to dust the creature dies,
Quick, from its cell, the enfranchised spirit flies;

Fills, with fresh energy, another form,
And towers an elephant, or glides a worm;
The awful lion's royal shape assumes;
The fox's subtlety, or peacock's plumes;
Swims, like an eagle, in the eye of noon,
Or wails, a screech-owl, to the deaf, cold moon;
Haunts the dread brakes, where serpents hiss and glare,
Or hums, a glittering insect, in the air.
The illustrious souls of great and virtuous men,
In noble animals revive again:
But base and vicious spirits wind their way,
In scorpions, vultures, sharks, and beasts of prey.
The fair, the gay, the witty, and the brave,
The fool, the coward, courtier, tyrant, slave;
Each, in congenial animals, shall find
A home and kindred for his wandering mind.

"Even the cold body, when enshrined in earth,
Rises again in vegetable birth:

From the vile ashes of the bad proceeds
A baneful harvest of pernicious weeds;
The relics of the good, awaked by showers,
Peep from the lap of death, and live in flowers;
Sweet modest flowers, that blush along the vale,
Whose fragrant lips embalm the passing gale."

THE BRAMIN.

EXTRACT FROM CANTO II.

* * * * *

Now, mark the words these dying lips impart,
And wear this grand memorial round your heart:
All that inhabit ocean, air, or earth,
From ONE ETERNAL SIRE derive their birth.
The Hand that built the palace of the sky
Form'd the light wings that decorate a fly:
The Power that wheels the circling planets round
Rears every infant flow'ret on the ground;
That Bounty which the mightiest beings share
Feeds the least gnat that gilds the evening air.
Thus all the wild inhabitants of woods,
Children of air, and tenants of the floods;

All, all are equal, independent, free,
And all the heirs of immortality!
For all that live and breathe have once been men,
And, in succession, will be such again:
Even you, in turn, that human shape must change,
And through ten thousand forms of being range.

Ah! then, refrain your brethren's blood to spill,
And, till you can create, forbear to kill!
Oft, as a guiltless fellow-creature dies,
The blood of innocence for vengeance cries:
Even grim, rapacious savages of prey,
Presume not, save in self-defence, to slay;
What, though to heaven their forfeit lives they owe,
Hath heaven commissioned thee to deal the blow?
Crush not the feeble, inoffensive worm,
Thy sister's spirit wears that humble form!
Why should thy cruel arrow smite yon bird?
In him thy brother's plaintive song is heard.

When the poor, harmless kid, all trembling, lies,
And begs his little life with infant cries,
Think, ere you take the throbbing victim's breath,
You doom a dear, an only child, to death.
When at the ring, the beauteous heifer stands,
— Stay, monster! stay those parricidal hands;
Canst thou not, in that mild dejected face,
The sacred features of thy mother trace?
When to the stake the generous bull you lead,
Tremble, — ah, tremble, — lest your father bleed.
Let not your anger on your dog descend,
The faithful animal was once your friend;
The friend whose courage snatch'd you from the grave,
When wrapp'd in flames or sinking in the wave.
— Rash, impious youth! renounce that horrid knife,
Spare the sweet antelope! — ah, spare — thy wife!
In the meek victim's tear-illumined eyes,
See the soft image of thy consort rise;

Such as she is, when by romantic streams,
Her spirit greets thee in delightful dreams;
Not as she looked, when blighted in her bloom;
Not as she lies, all pale in yonder tomb;
That mournful tomb, where all thy joys repose!
That hallow'd tomb, where all thy griefs shall close.

While yet I sing, the weary king of light
Resigns his sceptre to the queen of night;
Unnumber'd orbs of living fire appear,
And roll in glittering grandeur o'er the sphere.
Perhaps the soul, releas'd from earthly ties,
A thousand ages hence may mount the skies;
Through suns and planets, stars and systems range,
In each new forms assume, relinquish, change;
From age to age, from world to world aspire,
And climb the scale of being higher and higher;
But who these awful mysteries dare explore?
Pause, O my soul! and tremble and adore.

There is a Power, all other powers above,
Whose name is Goodness, and His nature Love,
Who call'd the infant universe to light,
From central nothing and circumfluent night.
On His great providence all worlds depend,
As trembling atoms to their centre tend:
In nature's face His glory shines confess'd,
She wears His sacred image on her breast;
His spirit breathes in every living soul;
His bounty feeds, his presence fills the whole;
Though seen, invisible — though felt, unknown:
All that exist, exist in Him alone.
But who the wonders of His hand can trace
Through the dread ocean of unfathom'd space?
When from the shore we lift our fainting eyes,
Where boundless scenes of Godlike grandeur rise;
Like sparkling atoms in the noontide rays,
Worlds, stars, and suns, and universes blaze!
Yet these transcendant monuments that shine,
Eternal miracles of skill divine,

These, and ten thousand more, are only still
The shadow of His power, the transcript of His will.

April 14. 1796.

THE END.

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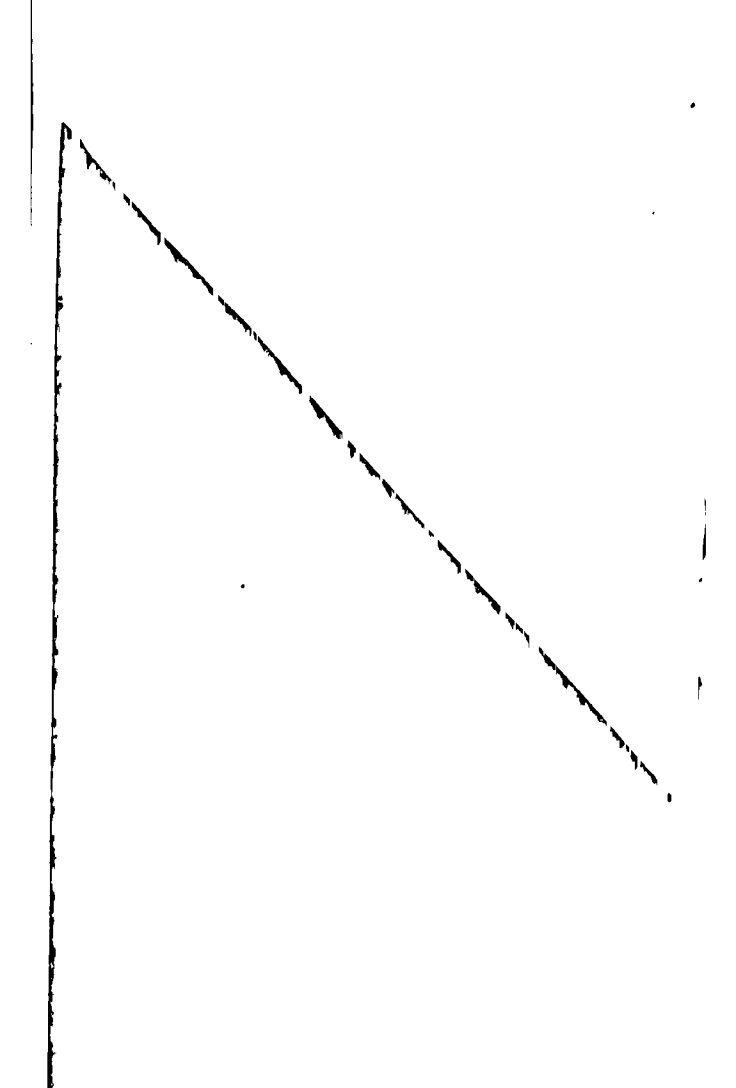

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